The Manifesto-Media Link: How Mass Media Mediate Manifesto Messages

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The Manifesto–Media Link: How Mass Media Mediate Manifesto Messages

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Summary

This study analyzes whether media coverage covers messages from parties' electoral programs (manifestos). Electoral programs contain detailed information on a party's future policy-making. However, few voters read electoral programs. Still, prior research often assumed that the content of manifestos is known to voters because media disseminate the content of manifestos to voters. This dissertation evaluates this "mediation assumption" empirically, and analyzes whether and how the mass media cover parties' electoral programs during the electoral campaign. If media coverage did not reflect parties' electoral programs, citizens would have no chance to base their vote choice on evaluations of those programs.

This study introduces the concept of the manifesto–media link in order to describe how media coverage can reflect programmatic offers. The manifesto–media link is formulated as three conditions that can be empirically evaluated and tested in a similar way to the conditions of the responsible party model. These are: First, media must cover similar issues to those that parties cover in their electoral programs. Second, media coverage must link issues with parties that emphasize these issues more than their competitors, in order to inform about the parties' issue priorities. Third, media must frame parties as left or right in a way that represents how parties emphasize left or right positions in their own manifestos.

Methodologically, the study combines secondary content analytical data on media coverage during the electoral campaign with data based on electoral programs. These findings suggest that the manifesto–media link is stable and robust. There is little to no systematic bias in favor of a certain type of party, however there are differences between quality and tabloid media. These findings contribute to our understanding of political representation and the functioning of political competition.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Arbeit geht der Frage nach, inwiefern die Medien während des Wahlkampfs über die Wahlprogramme der Parteien berichten. Die Wahlprogramme der Parteien enthalten Informationen darüber, was Parteien nach der Wahl vorhaben. Allerdings lesen wenige Wählerinnen und Wähler Wahlprogramme. Die vergangene Forschung über und mit Wahlprogrammdaten hat bisher angenommen, dass der Inhalt von Wahlprogrammen von den Medien verbreitet wird. Diese Doktorarbeit untersucht diese Annahme empirisch und analysiert, ob und wie Massenmedien während des Wahlkampfs über die Inhalte der Wahlprogramme berichten. Wenn Massenmedien nicht die Inhalte der Wahlprogramme verbreiten würden, hätten Bürgerinnen und Bürger kaum Chancen sich über das programmatische Angebot der Parteien zu informieren.

In dieser Arbeit wird das Konzept des Manifesto-Medien-Links entwickelt. Das Konzept bringt Theorien des Parteienwettbewerbs und Theorien der Medienselektion zusammen. Der Manifesto-Medien-Link formuliert drei Bedingungen, welche empirisch getestet werden können. Diese sind: Erstens, Medienberichterstattung und Wahlprogramme müssen zumindest zu einem gewissen Grad dieselben Themen diskutieren. Zweitens, Journalisten müssen Sachfragen mit jenen Parteien verknüpfen, welche diese Themen in ihren Wahlprogrammen stärker betonen als ihre Konkurrenten, um Wählerinnen und Wähler über die Prioritäten der Parteien zu informieren. Drittens, Medien müssen die ideologische Orientierung einer Partei sowie Veränderungen dieser korrekt wiedergeben.

Methodisch werden in der Arbeit Wahlprogramm- und Mediendaten kombiniert. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass der Manifesto-Medien-Link relativ stabil ist. Außerdem wird gezeigt, dass es nur geringe systematische Verzerrungen zugunsten bestimmter Parteien gibt. Jedoch zeigen sich Unterschiede zwischen Qualitäts- und Boulevardmedien. Die Ergebnisse haben Implikationen für unser Verständnis von politischer Repräsentation und den politischen Wettbewerb.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Mediation Assumption

Electoral programs[1] and political science dissertations share two characteristics: they are both highly informative, but no one ever reads them. Electoral programs provide detailed information on a party's policy plan, and their richness in information has inspired many political scientists to analyze electoral programs in order to infer parties' preferences.

Empirical research has shown that electoral programs do in fact provide many cues on parties' policy-making: first, electoral programs provide cues for how a party would deal with a country's foreign relationships when elected into government. A party's ideology as measured using electoral programs can explain contributions to military campaigns by supra-national organizations (Haesebrouck, 2016). Moreover, parties that speak more favorably of the military and put less emphasis on peace in their manifestos are more likely to initiate military disputes with other countries (Heffington, 2016). Secondly, in contrast to the public discourse of parties and politicians being pledge breakers and liars,[2] parties fulfill the majority of the pledges made in their electoral programs upon gaining office (Thomson et al., 2016; Bara, 2005). Parties that form a single party government with a majority in the legislature fulfill about three out of four of their electoral pledges, and parties forming coalition governments—who are under many more constraints—still fulfill around half of their promises. Thirdly, a party's ideology and issue emphasis as specified in electoral programs indicate a party's budgetary priorities. Parties emphasizing certain issue areas in their electoral program spend more money in these areas when in office than other parties (Hofferbert and Budge, 1992; Klingemann, Hofferbert,

[1] The terms (electoral) program and manifesto are used here interchangeably.

[2] In a survey conducted in Germany in 2013, 80% of the respondents indicated that they do not believe that parties stick to their pre-electoral promises once they are in office (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, 2013).

and Budge, 1994; Russo and Verzichelli, 2016; Horn and Jensen, 2016; for a critical stance, see King et al., 1993; Garritzmann and Seng, 2015). Furthermore, a party's ideology as measured with electoral programs also indicates spending preferences in various issue areas, such as public safety or defense (Wenzelburger, 2015; Russo and Verzichelli, 2016). Finally, electoral programs are not only relevant for parties in government, but also indicative for a party's behavior in opposition, as shown by a large congruence between positions of parties in electoral programs and speeches delivered in parliament (Louwerse, 2011; Lehmann, 2016).

One can summarize this body of research in two words: manifestos matter. The program-policy link is well-established, stable, and concerns many different aspects of policy-making. Given that electoral programs are highly informative about parties' behavior in office, reading and comparing them before elections would enable citizens to make a well–informed electoral choice.

However, voters by and large do not read electoral programs. Electoral programs are often painfully boring documents. Even for those with strong political inclinations, scaling the mountain of electoral programs represents a masochistic task. Electoral programs tend to be tedious—sometimes being surpassed even by political science dissertations in terms of entertainment value. Consequently, parties' electoral manifestos are ignored by most voters. Research on whether voters read electoral programs is very limited because data is scarce, for example, the consumption and knowledge of electoral manifestos is rarely addressed in election surveys (Rölle, 2002). The limited existing research suggests that the immediate consumption by voters of electoral programs is a minor phenomenon. Even in the UK, where manifestos have a long tradition and are sold in bookstores, the consumption of manifestos is minuscule. A study on the UK 2010 general election found that less than 10,000 printed manifestos from the three established parties were sold, indicating that few people are willing to pay to read electoral manifestos. The few buyers are supposedly "election enthusiasts" or strong partisans (Däubler, 2014). Although the 100,000 free downloads of the Labour manifesto (Kavanagh and Cowley, 2010, p. 185) from the Labour website is much higher than the book sell rates, compared to the size of the electorate, this is still a dramatically small number. Even many politicians think that manifestos are not well suited to be distributed to voters (Eder, Jenny, and Müller, 2017). It is fair to claim that the share of voters that actually read manifestos is very small.

Paradoxically, voters and parties were found to act *as if* voters read electoral manifestos (Adams, 2012). A large amount of research on policy change has shown that parties strategically adjust their electoral programs to seek votes, which indicates that parties act as if voters were aware of electoral programs. Parties for example alter their positions and issue emphasis in line with changes in public opinion (Adams et al., 2004; Adams

et al., 2006; Adams, Haupt, and Stoll, 2009; Klüver and Spoon, 2016; Spoon and Klüver, 2014) and adjust their program to account for recent electoral results (Somer-Topcu, 2009). Similarly, voters act as if they know the content of electoral programs. Voters reward mainstream parties electorally for moderating their positions and punish niche parties for moderating their position (Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009a; Adams et al., 2006). Equally, they punish parties at the ballot box for altering their emphasis on principle issues (Tavits, 2007). Voters even update their perceived positions of parties in line with changes in parties' positions as measured by electoral programs (Fernandez-Vazquez, 2014).

One of the explanations most often given as to why and how electoral programs matter to voters even if they don't read them is, what I call, the *mediation assumption*. Many scholars are aware of the electorate's ignorance of electoral programs and admit that they do not expect many citizens to read them. Still, they assume that the content of electoral programs is known to voters. The mechanism by which program content travels to voters that is most often mentioned is the mass media—which is expected to pick up the content of electoral programs and to disperse it through election news coverage before the election. The mediation assumption was made at the very beginning of manifesto research. Robertson (1976, p. 72) was one of the first to acknowledge that few voters read manifestos, and argued that the content of manifestos is known to voters because manifestos are disseminated by mass media. Table 1.1 lists a sample of citations that explicitly make the mediation assumption. The table indicates that the mediation assumption has evolved little over time and is still made by many researchers. While the research listed in table 1.1 make this assumption explicit, there are even more studies that implicitly make the same assumption. Any research that measures parties' strategies or preferences with data based on electoral programs, and attempts to explain some type of voter behavior or voter belief, assumes some kind of link between parties' programs and voters' beliefs about parties (eg. Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009a; Adams et al., 2006; Tavits, 2007; Fernandez-Vazquez, 2014).

The mediation assumption is sometimes stated, often made, but seldom tested. This study aims to empirically evaluate the mediation assumption.

Table 1.1: Examples of the mediation assumption

> "Though it is perhaps unlikely that many voters read them themselves, they [manifestos] are the source and official backing for any impression that the electorate may get of what the parties stand for. One has to take them seriously because they are the background for any mass media discussion of party policy [...]" (Robertson, 1976, p. 72)

"[US Party Platforms] reach ordinary electors mainly through press and television coverage." (Robertson, 1987, p. 45)

"The manifesto [in the UK] also reaches electors through the press conferences held to launch it, and through its influence over media discussion." (Robertson, 1987, p. 46)

"Published at the outset of the campaign for maximum media coverage, this sets themes to be emphasized by party spokesmen, which are then taken up by the media. While these may be blurred or shifted somewhat in the course of debate, reporters and discussants have an interest in pinning spokesmen down to what has been written in the only statement of policy issued authoritatively on behalf of the whole party." (Budge, 1994, pp. 449-50)

"In most democracies the manifesto or platform is launched at a press conference, with great publicity, designed to set the major themes for the whole election. It is through the appearance of programmatic themes – and the contest over them – in the media that the document makes its main impact on electors." (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge, 1994)

"One of their [manifestos] main purposes today is to provide material for the media to use during election campaigns–indirectly through media reports of press conferences based on manifesto item and more directly by some newspapers reproducing sections of manifestos verbatim–although this is now less common than in the past." (Bara, 2005, p. 586)

"Party election manifestos are hardly going to be read by large numbers of voters but they do influence media coverage, which in turn affects public opinion." (Bara, 2006)

"Programmatic statements are central features of parties. In party programmes, the political ideas and goals of parties are put on record. Although only few voters actually read party programmes, they are disseminated widely through the mass media." (Klingemann et al., 2006, p. 164)

"[...] it is fair to assume that manifestos still reflect the policy positions that parties want to be associated with in general, internally and externally. Manifestos are often the topic of heated debate at party conferences, and are scrutinized and compared in the media." (Tavits and Letki, 2009, p. 561)

> "Manifestos play an important role during election campaigns, when public attention centres on these documents. While few voters ever read these documents, they are disseminated by the media." (Keman, 2010)
>
> "Manifestos and their equivalents gain importance from the central role of parties because they are usually the only authoritative statement made by the party as such, and hence the only way electors can get information about what the party currently stands for in policy terms, and on this basis cast an informed vote. Few read the actual document of course but its contents are relayed through the media and general political discussion." (Bara and Volkens, 2013, p. 280)
>
> "Though often not widely read by the public, a party's manifesto is given substantial media coverage and introduces the common themes of the campaign" (Williams, 2015, p. 5)

The mediation assumption is not only made by scholars to justify the use of electoral programs to measure party preferences, but is a crucial link in the functioning of political representation according to the responsible party model (APSA, 1950; Thomassen, 1991; Thomassen, 1994; Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999). The responsible party model claims that parties have a central role in the process of political representation. At elections they compete for office and votes by formulating an offer to the citizens in the form of a program. Voters are expected to elect the party with the program that best fits their preferences. After the elections, parties are expected to implement the program they advertised before the election. Accordingly, elections empower voters to give parties a mandate to implement a specific policy program. The responsible party model demands much from the voters in regards to political knowledge. As voters base their vote choice mainly on the programmatic offer, they must know and be able to differentiate each party's offer.While parties produce many programmatic documents, electoral programs are the most authoritative statements published by parties (Budge, 1994). They are the policy plan that parties promise to implement after the election. Consequently, voters should know electoral programs. However, as outlined above, it is unlikely that voters know about electoral programs from reading them. As a consequence, the mediation assumption—that programmatic content from electoral programs is covered by the mass media during the electoral campaign—becomes crucial: if the media did not cover parties' electoral programs, citizens would not have a chance to access information about the programmatic offer of parties. What parties want, what they offer, and what they plan would be unknown to citizens, and their electoral choice would not be based on parties' programmatic

offers. Consequentially, elections would become meaningless.

1.2 The Research Questions

The mediation assumption claims that the content of electoral programs is communicated through the campaign coverage of media outlets. So this study of the mediation assumption addresses the following underlying research question:

Research Question: does the mass media inform voters about parties' electoral programs during the electoral campaign?

This broad question can be split into four related questions that look at different aspects of the coverage of manifesto content by the mass media. The primary interest of this study is the empirical evaluation of the mediation assumption. A secondary interest that builds upon the first, is the study of the causes and consequences of coverage of manifesto content by the mass media.

Question 1: how does the mass media cover parties' manifesto messages?

The first question considers the problem of what exactly to look at when analyzing the coverage of electoral programs by the mass media. Which parts and what content of electoral programs can one expect to be picked up by media coverage? What sections, passages, arguments, suggestions or elements might be covered, and what information is relevant?

The range of possibilities as to how the mass media can cover the content of electoral programs is huge. Some decades ago, electoral programs were sometimes reprinted in full by partisan press outlets or distributed as a supplement to newspapers. This case of reprinting is at one extreme in terms of program coverage, as the reprints reproduce the electoral programs verbatim without any selection or filtering of information. In contrast, media coverage is often highly selective, focusing on only a small part or even a single suggestion contained in the electoral manifesto. In the German federal elections in 2013, the Green Party—as did the other established German parties—presented a book-length electoral program with detailed policy suggestions in numerous policy areas. However, one of the most salient media debates on the program revolve around one single pledge—the suggestion to introduce a "veggie day" in public canteens. Both are extreme examples illustrating that there are many possibilities as to how the mass media can cover electoral programs, ranging from a verbatim reprint to highly selective reporting on a single pledge.

The aim of the first part of this study is to identify conceptually the

central characteristics in electoral programs that need to be covered by the media to ensure that political representation works. The responsible party model formulates conditions, in regard to parties and voters, that are necessary for political representation to work. For example, parties need to present distinct policy programs, voters need to know the content of them, and parties must stick to their programs and implement them when elected into office (Thomassen, 1994; Adams, 2001). These conditions can be empirically tested. In order to answer to the first question, this study introduces the concept of the manifesto–media link. The manifesto-media link follows the idea of the responsible party model and equally formulates conditions, in regard to the coverage of manifesto messages by mass media that are conducive for political representation, and that are empirically testable.

Question 2: to what extent does the mass media cover parties' manifesto messages?

The second question is an empirical evaluation of the manifesto–media link. On average, to what extent is the content of electoral programs covered by the media during the electoral campaign? The answer relies on a valid and reliable measurement of the manifesto–media link. This question can also be understood as a more general test of the mediation assumption. Is it empirically justified to assume that parties' messages in electoral programs are disseminated by media coverage during the electoral campaign? The answer to this question is far from evident. Political parties and the mass media act according to two different rationales (Mazzoleni, 1987). Actions by political parties and hence the content of electoral programs are shaped by a political logic that is dominated by ideology and power, and electoral programs are strongly influenced by a party's continuing ideology and its short-term attempts to seek votes. In contrast, the media acts using a different rationale, with newsworthiness as the major selection criteria. Media coverage is shaped by current events instead of long-term developments or plans. Most importantly, media coverage is highly selective and strongly filtered. Media agendas are limited in scope and cannot admit all information. Which parties gain a voice in the news and which issues make it onto the media agenda are the results of a selection process.

Question 3: when does the mass media cover parties' manifesto messages?

The third question addresses variation in the strength of the manifesto–media link. The goal is to identify conditioning and moderating factors that inhibit or foster the manifesto–media link. Media content is known to be influenced by factors on very different levels such as the routines applied by news professionals, the sources of journalists, the outlet's owner influence

or the impact of the political system (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991). Independent of the media outlet and the party, certain messages in manifestos might get a larger media echo than other messages due to their higher newsworthiness. Similarly, certain parties' messages – for example messages of more resourceful- or more influential parties – might be more likely to be distributed in media coverage pointing at a structural bias of the mass media that favors powerful actors (Hofstetter, 1976). Furthermore, one could expect a partisan bias in the sense that media outlets promote the manifesto messages of their affiliated parties more or differently than the manifesto messages of other parties. Finally, the system level could have an impact on media coverage of electoral programs. For example media coverage in highly fragmented party systems necessarily has to be more selective. Or higher degrees of journalistic independence could lead to a higher autonomy of journalists in regard to parties as sources of media coverage (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). The goal of the second question is to generalize the empirical existence while the third question attempts to contextualize it by identifying the causes of the manifesto–media link (Esser and Pfetsch, 2004). This requires a comparative research design in which the manifesto–media link is studied across several electoral campaigns in different countries.

Question 4: does the coverage of parties' manifesto messages matter to voters' perception of parties?

The availability of information on electoral programs in media coverage is an important necessary condition for voters having access to information on parties' electoral programs. However, it would be naive to assume that media coverage simply translates into voters' knowing party programs. Consequently, this final question addresses whether media coverage of electoral programs influences voters' perception and knowledge of the parties' programmatic offer.

1.3 Contributions to Scholarly Debates

This dissertation makes contributions to various scholarly debates in several fields. First and foremost it makes a contribution to the discussion surrounding the functioning of democracy and the role of mass media in political representation. Next, it enhances our knowledge of party competition and how information matters to party competition. Lastly, it contributes to the debate concerning the functions and audiences of electoral programs.

Democratic Representation and the Mass Media

Modern democracies have long been described as competitive democracies (Schumpeter, 1950 [1994]). Parties are the central actors that compete for votes and office by formulating distinct policy programs (Müller, 2000;

Thomassen, 1994), and voters evaluate these programs and base their electoral decisions on them. Parties and voters can usually be situated on the ideological left-right spectrum that structures most societal issues and debates (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990). At elections, voters mandate parties to implement their program, and in competitive democracies, it is the role of mass media to inform them about parties' programs (Strömbäck, 2005).

That democracy functions according to the competitive model has been called into question by various findings. The left-right dimension is found to be increasingly incapable of capturing the variety of societal conflicts that exist (Albright, 2010; Kriesi et al., 2008; Kriesi et al., 2012b; Warwick, 2002; Bakker, Jolly, and Polk, 2012). Parties are said to have evolved from programmatic to catch-all and cartel parties offering indistinguishable centrist and mainstream programs (Kirchheimer, 1966; Katz and Mair, 1995). Vote choice is said to be based increasingly on retrospective evaluations instead of prospective evaluations of parties. Instead of selecting their future representatives, voters presumably reward or punish the incumbent party for its past performance (Manin, 1997). Allegedly, representation has changed from a delegate or mandate model to a pure trustee model. Democracy has deteriorated from a competitive democracy to an audience democracy where the role of the people is reduced from the sovereign to an observer (Manin, 1997; Thomassen and van Ham, 2014).

However, the alleged transition from competitive democracy to audience democracy is highly contentious. An empirical cross-national analysis of parties' programs and party membership figures found little evidence that parties have evolved to catch-all parties (Giebler et al., 2015). Furthermore, although short-term factors are increasingly more important than long-term ones such as party identification and social class, this has not necessarily resulted in a change from prospective to retrospective voting behavior (Weßels, 2014).

Parallel to the alleged change in the functioning of political representation, political communication between voters and parties is also said to have drastically changed over the last decades, with mass media taking an increasingly more dominant role (Schulz, 2011, ch. 2.2). Societal changes resulting from an increasing importance of the media have been described as a process of "mediatization", which encompasses several different phases (Strömbäck, 2008). In the first phase, the media become the dominant source of information for the citizens. In the second phase, the media emancipate itself from political control. In the third phase, political actors start to adapt their strategies to the logic of the media. In the fourth and final phase, the media logic dominates politics, and political actors not only adapt to the media logic, but adopt the media logic itself (Strömbäck, 2008).

Symptoms of the mediatization of politics and adaptation to the media logic are, for example, the professionalization of electoral campaigning, the permanent maintenance of public relation offices in political parties and the

use of marketing strategies in the realm of politics.

The changing of the nature of political representation from a competitive model of democracy to an audience democracy is certainly not independent of the changes in political communication described under the term of mediatization. However, whether and how mediatization contributes to the changes in the functioning of political representation and democracy is under debate.

The popular "media malaise" thesis claims that the mass media often has negative effects on democracy (Newton, 1999). The mass media is said to contribute to a depolitizication because it covers politics instead of policy issues. The electoral campaign is presented as a horse-race between parties, covering poll after poll but little policy content or real issues (Broh, 1980; Banducci and Hanretty, 2014). Furthermore, the mass media has a strong negativity bias—focusing on failures, disaster, and other negative events—and thereby contributing to distrust and cynicism towards political institutions (Niven, 2001). In particular, television is found to have negative effects on democracy: television reporting frames most stories as personal and episodic instead of uncovering structural relationships and problems in society and hence fostering a depolitizication of many issues (Iyengar, 1991). Television is said to produce asocial couch potatoes who would rather watch TV alone instead of participating in community life (Putnam, 2000). Some media organizations have been found to have a strong partisan bias, significantly shaping the preferences of its audience instead of providing unbiased and impartial information to citizens (Durante and Knight, 2012; DellaVigna and Kaplan, 2007). The media malaise hypothesis brings the mediation assumption into question: if the mass media provides little news on policy issues, or distorted and biased information, one could hardly expect that they would cover parties' manifesto messages.

However, the mass media is also considered an essential institution in the persistence of democracy. The mass media guarantees alternative sources of information and free speech, two necessary conditions for the survival of democracies (Dahl, 1971). The mass media is the most important, and often the only, source of information on politics for many citizens. Accordingly, the political knowledge of citizens strongly depends on media exposure and media coverage (Hofstetter and Strand, 1983; Jerit, Barabas, and Bolsen, 2006; Barabas and Jerit, 2009; Banducci, Giebler, and Kritzinger, 2015; Norris, 1996).

This raises the question concerning the role that the mass media plays in this alleged change from competitive to audience democracy: does the mass media contribute towards the change from competitive democracy to an audience democracy by ignoring or distorting manifesto messages, or does the mass media enable competitive democracy by guaranteeing that citizens have access to information on party programs? Does the media reflect or bias the parties' programmatic offer?

The Role of Information in Party Competition

The societal changes described above have had huge consequences on party competition, which has changed dramatically over the last few decades. Parties have lost many of their supporters and members, and the increasing volatility requires parties to invest significantly more in mobilizing their voters. Parallel to this partisan dealignment, the cognitive mobilization of citizens as a result of the rising levels of education led to an increasing role of information. Today, vote choice is based less on a voters partisan identity and other stable beliefs and is much more the product of information provided during the electoral campaign (Weßels et al., 2014; Dalton, 1984). Parties can to a lesser extent rely on their decreasing number of supporters, and have stronger incentives to adjust their program from one to the next election. Parties are vote maximizers and vote mobilizers, seeking the program that best fits the distribution of voters' preferences. However, parties face a dilemma in that they choose their program under uncertainty (Budge, 1994). Parties don't know the voters' preferences and can only make good guesses about it based on some indications: for example based on their last election results, or based on how they stand in the polls. Comparative party research has extensively analyzed how parties try to change their program to match changes in public opinion and the party system (Adams, 2012; Wagner and Meyer, 2014; Klüver and Spoon, 2016; Spoon and Klüver, 2014; Abou-Chadi, 2016).

However, a few studies have recently raised doubts as to whether these changes in the supply side are perceived by voters—which again leads to the broader question concerning what shapes voters' perceptions of party preferences. A seminal study compared changes in party positions based on electoral programs and changes in positions perceived by voters and found no empirical association between the two (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2011). This has called into question whether parties' strategic program-adjustments even matter to voters. Another study has found that parties' issue emphasis strategies in electoral programs are not correlated with parties' issue emphasis strategies measured in newspapers (Helbling and Tresch, 2011) questioning whether citizens even have the chance to perceive such strategies. One line of research has argued that voters use heuristics that are based on a party's behavior instead of the party's rhetoric from manifestos. For example, voters place parties that form a coalition closer together on an ideological scale than parties that do not form a coalition (all else equal), suggesting that voters use the coalition composition to approximate party positions (Fortunato and Stevenson, 2013; Fortunato and Adams, 2015; Spoon and Klüver, 2017). Another line of research has argued that voters' perceptions of policy changes are similar to the ones perceived by experts (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2014; Adams, Ezrow, and Leiter, 2012). These findings have been interpreted as voters making use of

a "wider information environment" instead of relying on electoral programs to update their perceptions of party positions. This wider information environment might also include information from the mass media. However, as we know little about the precise sources of information consulted by experts, whether the "wider information environment" includes the mass media, interpretation in regard to the media is highly speculative.

At the same time, the study by Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu (2011) on the incongruence of changes in manifestos and perceived positions, that initiated lots of this research, has been called into question by a replication applying a different modeling approach (Fernandez-Vazquez, 2014). The link between party positions in manifestos and perceived positions by voters is weak but existent, bringing Fernandez-Vazquez to the conclusion that future research should look at conditioning factors in the perception of policy changes.

So, although much existing research points to the potential relevance of the mass media as an important source of information for perceived party preferences, comparative empirical party research has not looked at the role of the mass media. This is even more astonishing as the media is without a doubt the central source of information for many other types of political information. This study brings the mass media into the picture.

Functions and Audiences of Electoral Programs

This study joins a long tradition of research on electoral programs. Robertson (1976) initiated this tradition with comparisons of US party platforms and British electoral manifestos and in 1979 laid the foundations for the Manifesto Research Group (MRG): a group of researchers with a shared interest in electoral programs, that collected and analyzed electoral programs with a common coding scheme, producing a data set with quantified measures of party preferences. This work was continued by the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP), and since 2009, by the project Manifesto Research on Political Representation (MARPOR).[3] The data distributed by the Manifesto Project (Budge et al., 2001; Klingemann et al., 2006; Volkens et al., 2014a) has had a major impact on research on political parties, as it has been the only data set providing comparable measures of parties' preferences over time and across countries. The data set initiated an entire research tradition involving comparisons of parties' preferences over time and across countries. In hundreds of publications, scholars have applied manifesto data to various research questions on topics as diverse as party competition, electoral behavior, government composition, government spending, foreign policy, and many more. One line of research uses manifesto data as

[3] I use the term Manifesto Project to refer to the combined work of MRG, CMP and MARPOR. I was a research fellow in the Manifesto Project (MARPOR) for most of the time I worked on this dissertation.

independent variables and as a proxy as to whether a party is left or right or has certain preferences, in order to explain some kind of party behavior—such as policy-making processes. Another uses manifesto data as dependent variable, attempting to explain why some parties change their positions over time or to explain differences between countries. An analysis conducted by Volkens et al. (2015a) indicates that between 2000 and 2015, around 240 articles in the eight most relevant political science journals that deal with party politics and related fields used manifesto data.

While there is a large body of research that uses manifesto data as proxy measures for party preferences, there is surprisingly little research *about* manifestos. The "how and why of party manifestos" as well as the manifesto audiences are largely understudied (Harmel, 2016). Most policy documents have a clear function. For example, general party platforms should unite the party behind a common program by translating a latent ideology into a program. Similarly, electoral leaflets are clearly written as instruments to mobilize and persuade voters during the electoral campaign. Press releases are directed at journalists in order to inform them about current events, stances or positions. In contrast, theory on electoral programs suggests that they can serve multiple functions and target various audiences (Merz and Regel, 2013a). First, manifestos can be used as a work plan or a "to-do list" by parliamentarians and ministers after the elections. Second, manifestos can serve as electoral advertisement to mobilize voters and attract media attention. Third, manifestos can be considered as signals sent to other parties in order to form or exclude potential coalitions. Fourthly, manifestos might also be written to strengthen the party's collective identity and to mobilize party members for the electoral campaign.

While all these different audiences and functions are theoretically plausible, there is limited empirical evidence as to whether manifestos fulfill these functions. Moreover, there is likely a trade-off between the different potential audiences. Parties might face difficulties in addressing the public and party members with one single program (Harmel et al., 2016). By analyzing whether the media coverage represents manifesto messages, this study adds to our understanding of the functions and target audiences of manifestos.

1.4 Structure of the Book

This book contains seven chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 provide the theoretical and conceptual framework. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 (the "empirical chapters") contain the derivation of hypotheses and the empirical analyses, and each have an introduction and conclusion and could be read as stand-alone studies (although if read as such the bigger picture might remain unseen.) Chapter 7 completes the study with a conclusion and discussion.

Chapter 2: Manifestos, Media and Political Representation

In the second chapter I argue that the dissemination of parties' manifesto messages in media coverage is necessary for the proper functioning of political representation. To underline that claim, I review the party mandate approach to political representation, which emphasizes the importance of parties as actors and elections as instruments of representation, and considers electoral programs to serve as contract-like documents ensuring a party mandate given by voters to parties. This chapter reviews research on the dissemination of manifesto content in media coverage and discusses the shortcomings of previous research.

Chapter 3: The Manifesto–Media Link

The third chapter introduces the concept of the manifesto–media link. The manifesto–media link addresses the first research question *(how does the media cover...?)*. The manifesto–media link is dyadic connecting specific outlets with specific manifestos at the same election. This concept captures three different dimensions of the programmatic representation: the congruence of agendas between electoral programs and media coverage during the electoral campaign, the relationship between a party's issue strategies and the linkage of parties and issues in media coverage, and the framing of parties in media coverage as left or right and its correspondence with the focal party's statements in its electoral program. This chapter also reviews the methodological debate concerning how to measure party preferences using manifesto data, and also discusses potential pitfalls and challenges in comparing manifesto and media data. Lastly, the chapter presents an overview of the research design of the three empirical chapters which each deal with one dimension of the manifesto–media link.

Chapter 4: Party Agendas and Media Agendas

The first empirical chapter deals with the first dimension of the manifesto–media link: the congruence of agendas from electoral programs and media coverage. Agenda congruence is crucial because if the mass media discusses issues different to those that the parties did during the electoral campaign, parties will have trouble to get their messages out and voters will have difficulties in getting information on parties' positions and priorities. The chapter addresses the extent to which parties and media coverage discuss the same issues to provide an initial answer to the second research question *(to what extent does the media cover...?)*. By studying what determines agenda congruence, it also provides an answer to the third research question *(when does the media cover...?)*. Hypotheses relate to the party and media system, the role of parties, the type of media outlets and the partisan ties of media outlets. Content analytical data from the European Election Study 2009 on the news coverage of 127 media outlets, and data based on 119 electoral programs from the Euromanifesto Project, serve as measures of media and

party agendas.

Chapter 5: Party Strategies and Party–Issue Linkages

The next empirical chapter looks at the second dimension of the manifesto–media link: the impact of issue emphasis strategies in manifestos on the linkages of issues *to* parties in media coverage. Such party–issue linkages in the media are crucial if parties want to gain or maintain ownership of political issues. The chapter tests hypotheses according to which journalists use parties' issue emphases and issue positions as a heuristic to decide which party to grant voice when debating certain issues. It strongly focuses on studying the questions concerning whether there is a link between party strategies and party–issue linkages, and if so how strong it is, and hence addresses the second *(to what extent does the media cover...?)* and the third research question *(when does the media cover...?)*. It combines and analyses data sets based on electoral programs and election news coverage of national elections in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK between 1991 and 2007.

Chapter 6: Stated, Reported and Perceived Left-Right Positions

The last empirical chapter addresses the third dimension of the manifesto–media link: the correspondence between parties' left-right positions as stated in manifestos, and the framing of parties as left-and right in media coverage. Here, I argue that election news coverage serves as a mediator between the party policy shifts evident in electoral programs and a change in voters' perceived positions of that party. The chapter provides answers to the second research question *(to what extent does the media cover...?)* and to the fourth research question *(does it matter to voters' perception of parties?)* It is hypothesized that a party's visibility in media coverage serves as an important moderator in this mediation process. If parties are visible, voters update their perception relying on the position reported in media coverage. If parties are absent in media coverage, voters do not update their perceived position. This claim is assessed by combining data based on electoral programs, press coverage during the electoral campaign and post-election surveys in Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK at national elections in the 1990s and 2000s.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The concluding chapter summarizes the results of the study. It discusses the implications of the findings for the central scholarly debates outlined above. The chapter also discusses the limitations and drawbacks of the study and makes suggestions for future research.

Framework and Concept

Chapter 2

Manifestos, Media and Political Representation

In this chapter, I argue that the reflection of electoral programs in media coverage is a prerequisite for the functioning of political representation. I will illustrate the party mandate approach to political representation which emphasizes the importance of political parties as actors, elections as instruments of representation and electoral programs as contract-like documents that ensure a mandate given by voters to parties. Building upon this, I will illustrate the role of the media in assuring accessibility and availability of information in the process of political representation. Moreover, I will review research that touches the question of whether the content of electoral programs is reflected in media coverage and point out major shortcomings of existing studies.

2.1 The Party Mandate Model of Political Representation

The concept of political representation is probably one of the most important ideas of modern democracy. Though, as it is often in political science, a highly important concept, is simultaneously a highly ambivalent one. Hanna Pitkin (1967) claimed that the very different understandings of representation share a common core: the idea that something absent is made present. The key question of political representation is how the preferences of citizens can be made present – be represented – in parliament, government and the legislative process.

Modern theory on political representation theory described political representation as a problem of a principal-agent relationship (Müller, 2000; Mansbridge, 2009). How can it be ensured that the agents – the representatives – despite their own interests and preferences act in line with the interest of the principal – the citizens? Principal-agent theory offered several

mechanism how this agency dilemma can be overcome. In contemporaneous democracy, the most important instrument to solve the agency dilemma between representatives and represented are free, fair and secret elections (Powell, 2000). At elections the citizens choose their representatives. Elections can be considered as an ex ante or as an ex post control mechanism (Andeweg and Thomassen, 2005). Elections serve as an ex ante control if citizens select representatives. Then, citizens base their vote choice on their expectations of the representatives' future behavior. Elections serve as an ex post control mechanism if citizens use elections as a sanctioning mechanism. They reward or punish representatives for their past performance by re-electing them or by casting them out of office.

Independent of the understanding of the role of elections as control mechanism, there are different approaches to describe the relationship between citizens and representatives. One can distinguish between the focus and the style of representation (Eulau et al., 1959). The first is related to the question whom do legislators represent and the latter to the question how they represent (Weßels, 2007). The focus of representation is in most european countries on political parties. Empirical research on political representation had its origin in the US where the *focus* of representation of individual deputies are their constituencies (Miller and Stokes, 1963). In Europe too, most constitutions consider individual legislators as agents of representation whose legislative behavior is free and only determined by their conscience. However, this view of representation as a link between an individual member of parliament and its constituency is analytically not very fruitful and empirically implausible in the context of most European democracies (Thomassen, 1991, hower see also Esaiasson and Holmberg, 1996). The formal constitutional chain of delegation does not reflect the actual practice of party democracy. The chain of delegation does not directly link citizens with members of parliament, but goes from citizens to political parties, and from parties to parlamentarians and elected officials (Müller, 2000). Where political parties act in a cohesive way, they "are *the* central mechanism to make the constitutional chain of political delegation and accountability work in practice." (Müller, 2000, p. 330).

In regard to the style of political representation, scholars distinguish between the trustee and the delegate model (Weßels, 2007). A trustee is elected, but not instructed by the represented. The represented literally trusts the representative that he will act in his interest. In contrast, the delegate model sees the representative as elected with instructions. Another attempt to describe the style of representation was made by Esaiasson and Holmberg (1996) with the direction of representation. They rephrased the question of political representation and asked whether representation is run-from-above or run-from-below. Representation run-from-below claims that citizens' preferences are the starting point for the process of political representation. These preferences can be exogenously driven for example

Table 2.1: Modes of representation

		elections as control mechanisms	
		ex ante	ex post
direction	from above	authorization	accountability
	from below	delegation	responsiveness

Source: Andeweg and Thomassen (2005)

by non-political processes. Preferences and citizens opinions are not stable but can change over time and representatives need to respond to the changing preferences of the represented. Political representation is achieved by the responsiveness of elite actors that react to and constantly adopt to a changing public opinion (Stimson, Mackuen, and Erikson, 1995). Representation run-from-above assumes that the process of representation is elite-driven and strongly influenced by the behavior of the representatives. The preferences of the citizens are not exogenously given but shaped by the behavior of the representatives. Citizens react to elite behavior and evaluate their representative based on what they did in the past or plan to do in the future.

Andeweg and Thomassen (2005) combined the two dimensions of representation (the direction of representation and the role of elections as sanctioning or selection mechanism) to a 2-by-2 matrix resulting in a typology of four modes of political representation (see table 2.1). Delegation describes a situation where citizens choose a representative and assign a task for this representative. Responsiveness means elite actors adapt to the changing preferences of citizens and are sanctioned for being non-responsive. Accountability assumes that citizens evaluate the past performance and vote accordingly in favor or against the current representative. Authorization refers to the idea that citizens select their representatives for a plan presented by the representative. Delegation and authorization differ in the way that in authorization the representative makes a suggestion how to act in the future while for delegation this suggestion is made by the represented.

The coverage of the content of electoral programs by the mass media is particularly important when conceptualizing political representation as a process of authorization. An approach to political representation as a process of authorization was proposed in detail as the responsible party model (APSA, 1950; Ranney, 1954; Thomassen, 1994). Supporters of the reponsible party model claim that a mandate view of political representation is at work in most democracies: At elections, parties bundle policies and make a programmatic offer to the citizens. Then, voters evaluate the different parties' offers and compare them to their own preferences. Subsequently,

voters select the offer that best reflects their preferences and thereby give a mandate to a party for implementing its program. When finally elected into office, parties implement their program by legislative acts (Weßels, 2007; Fuchs, 1993).

The idea of a mandate model of political representation has its origin in majoritarian political systems where the winning party forms a single-party government. Therefore, the mandate was understood as a government mandate. Parties elected into government are mandated to implement the policies they suggested before the election (Ranney, 1954). A further development of the mandate theory generalized the idea of a mandate from two-party systems to political systems with multi-party systems and coalition governments. McDonald, Mendes, and Budge (2004) suggest that representation is achieved by a median mandate where the preferences of the median voter are linked to the median parliamentary party. Due to its pivotal role in parliament, the median parliamentary party has a strong influence on public policy. A broader approach to the party mandate claims that a mandate cannot only be fulfilled by government parties (Louwerse, 2011). Parliamentary parties in opposition are mandated, too. They can fulfill their mandate for example by putting forward their program in parliamentary speeches (Louwerse, 2011) or other forms of legislative behavior.

Table 2.2: The conditions of the responsible party model (Thomassen, 1994; Adams, 2001)

Divergence. Parties must present distinct programmatic offers to voters.
Cohesion. Parties must be cohesive in regard to their programmatic offer.
Implementation. Parties must implement their programs when elected into office.
Voting. Voters must base their vote choice on parties' programmatic offers.

There are three variants of the mandate approach that make different claims about the content of the mandate (Louwerse, 2011): First, the pledge approach considers the mandate as a list of policy promises. A pledge is a concrete policy suggestion. Lowering the income tax by 2 percentage points or raising the minimum wage to 10 euro would be such pledges (Thomson, 2001). Then, parties fulfill their mandate by introducing the specific policy. Second, the saliency approach considers the mandate as an agenda that signals a party's priorities for certain issues over others (Schmitt and

Thomassen, 1999; Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge, 1994). The fulfillment of the mandate according to the saliency approach can be measured by comparing a party's emphases of issues before the election with its budgetary spending in the policy area after the election (Horn and Jensen, 2016). Third, the spatial approach considers the mandate as a position on an ideological dimension (Louwerse, 2011). The spatial mandate is fulfilled when a party after the election sticks to its pre-electorally announced position.

A mandate model of political representation can only function if certain conditions are met. These conditions slightly differ for the different variants of the mandate model, but their common core is summarized in table 2.2. In the following section, I will discuss how electoral programs help to meet these conditions.

2.2 Role and Functions of Electoral Programs

Electoral programs are a popular phenomenon across the globe that travels far beyond West European established democracies. An electoral program is here defined as a document published and ratified by a political party before an election that contains a detailed policy plan for the time after the election.

In the UK and the US, the publication of election manifestos and electoral platforms is a part of the political culture for long (Robertson, 1976). However, even in younger and less established democracies, parties quickly adopted this tradition from established democracies. Today, electoral programs are common in established democracies such as the ones of the OECD but also much beyond these "usual suspects" (Klingemann et al., 2006; Volkens et al., 2016). Political science has succesfully analyzed parties' electoral programs in countries from all five continents, in presidential and parliamentary systems, consensus and majoritarian systems, democratic and even authoritarian regimes (Volkens et al., 2016; Elischer, 2010). In some countries, parties do not publish electoral programs, but the functions fulfilled by electoral programs are fulfilled by other documents or texts (Merz and Regel, 2013b). For example in Australia party leaders traditionally delivered a speech at the party convention before the election in which they summarize the party's political agenda and commit to a policy plan. These speeches similarly to electoral programs cover a broad range of issues and positions (Robertson, 1987).

The role of electoral programs was described as a contract between voters and parties (Ray, 2007) that ensures a party mandate. Prior research has extensively shown that electoral programs truly are manifestations of a party's programmatic offer that matter for policy-making. Electoral programs help to meet the conditions of the responsible party model formulated above: they illustrate policy differences between parties, increase a party's

cohesion and serve as policy guidelines for the party's work in parliament and government.

Electoral programs are manifestations of the policy divergence between parties. Electoral programs contain different kinds of information that are related to the three types of mandate: First, they document concrete policy pledges in different policy areas, eg. a reform of the health care system or the raise or cut of pensions and/or taxes. Second, they contain information on a party's positions. On the one hand, electoral programs contain information on parties position on salient issues, eg. whether a party is in favor or against a minimum wage, abortion, or nuclear power. On the other hand, electoral programs also serve as a cue for a party's general left-right position that can be derived based on the relative emphasis of left and right issues and positions (Laver and Budge, 1992). Third, they contain information about a party's priority for certain policy areas and issues. Although electoral programs have an almost encyclopaedic character as they cover a broad range of policy areas, they still provide information on a party's priorities because they address certain problems and issues in more detail than others, repeat certain claims or even place some issues prominently in the title or subtitle of the document. Numerous studies have shown that electoral programs indeed indicate differences between parties, in terms of their left-right positions (Volkens and Klingemann, 2002; Budge and McDonald, 2006), in their emphases of issues (Franzmann, 2011; Merz and Regel, 2013a; Volkens and Merz, 2015; Dolezal et al., 2014) and their electoral pledges (Thomson, 2001).

Electoral programs increase the cohesion of political parties. This is mostly achieved by the long internal drafting process that involves different intra-party actors and the broad enactment of electoral programs at party conventions or similar party bodies. The manifesto formation process is heavily underresearched and up to now mostly limited to case studies. Although there are large differences in terms of participation of rank-and-file members in the creation of these documents, the idealtypical manifesto formation process is quite long and usually starts a year or longer before election day. A drafting commitee or the party leadership creates a first draft that is discussed and sharpened in several steps (Däubler, 2012). At the end of this process the final draft is discussed and ratified by a party convention that takes place few months before the election or by the party leadership (Dolezal et al., 2012). The degree of participation in these party conventions differs drastically between parties and over time where in some cases amendments and changes to the draft are very common and the content of these documents substantively changes (Hornsteiner, 2016). In other cases, the conventions only ratify these documents without any change. In both scenarios, the version finally put to vote often enjoys extremely large support, sometimes even unanimous support despite the hundreds of delegates at these party conventions. The discursive elements during this process

and the exchange of arguments can bring internal factions closer together that are otherwise not forced to talk to each other or at least to agree to remain silent on controversial issues (van de Wardt, 2014). Moreover, as parties have an interest to enact programs with large majorities at party conventions (as anything else would ruin a party's image in the public), it is unlikely that positions that strongly divide the party will end up in its electoral program because it could push delegates to vote against the whole document. As manifestos thereby have an extremely high legitimacy within a party, they "occupy a unique position as the only fully authoritative statement of the party policy for an election" (Budge, 1994, p. 455). The enactment of electoral manifestos is probably one of the few occasions where treating parties as unitary actors is plausible.

Electoral programs serve as guidelines for policy-making after the election. In multi-party systems, immediately after the election, electoral programs serve as the base for government formation: Positions in electoral programs are reflected in the coalition agreement between parties forming a coalition government (Bäck, Debus, and Dumont, 2011) and issue priorities in electoral programs are a predictor of the portfolio distribution between coalition parties (Däubler and Debus, 2009). Moreover, electoral programs serve as a monitoring tool and yardstick for the extra-parliamentary party and voters to evaluate the work of their parliamentarians and ministers. Although an electoral program is not legally binding for legislators, diverging from it is risky as the extra-parliamentary party or a legislator's voters could sanction legislators, for example by not nominating them for the next election or – in case of voters – not voting for them. And indeed, electoral programs serve as policy guidelines for parlamentarians and government. First, positions reflected in speeches delivered by parliamentarians on the floor show a large congruence with the positions reflected in electoral programs (Louwerse, 2011; Lehmann, 2016). Second, parties implement their promises when in office. In public discourse and media coverage, politicians and parties are often considered as pledge-breakers whose politics in office deviates largely from what they promised before the election. Though, empirical research on the fulfillment of electoral pledges mostly conducted by the Comparative Party Pledges Group shows another picture (Thomson et al., 2016). A conclusive study analyzing 13,000 electoral pledges published in more than 100 electoral programs from eleven different countries indicates varying degrees of pledge fulfillment between different types of government. Parties that form a single party government with a majority in the legislature fulfill between 69 and 86 percent of their pledges. Parties forming coalition governments who are under much more constraints still fulfill between 45 to 63 percent of their promises. This comparative study confirms the findings of many single country studies from the Netherlands (Thomson, 2001), Ireland (Costello and Thomson, 2008), Spain (Artes, 2011), and the UK (Bara, 2005). Third, issue priorities in electoral programs indicate

budgetary spending preferences. In an extensive study, Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge analyzed whether there is relationship between a party's preferences stated in its electoral program and government expenditures in the following legislative period (Hofferbert and Klingemann, 1990; Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge, 1994). Their methodological approach and their interpretation of a strong causal link between program and spending was criticized and put into question by King et al. (1993). However, lately the program-policy link could be established by other scholars in a methodologically sounder way – at least for some countries and issue areas (Wenzelburger, 2015; Russo and Verzichelli, 2016; Horn and Jensen, 2016).

So, indeed, the research reviewed above clearly indicates that electoral programs help to fulfill the first three conditions of the party mandate model of political representation (divergence, cohesion and implementation). The next section will discuss the fourth condition (voters must base their vote choice on an evaluation of the parties' policy offer) and the role of mass media in assuring it.

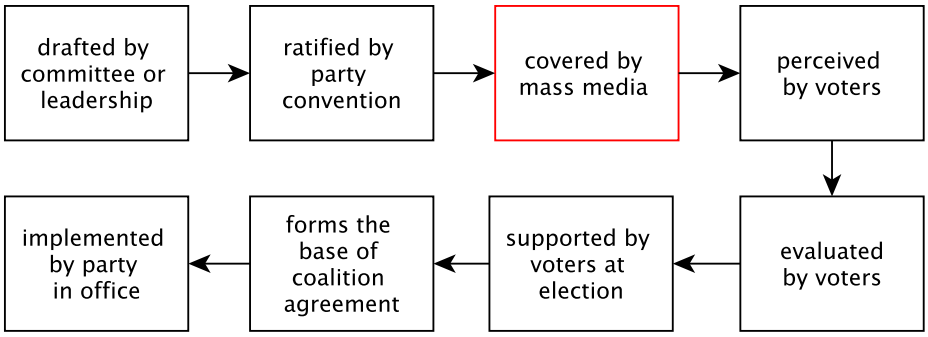
2.3 Information and Mass Media in Representative Democracies

The assumption of the responsible party model that voters need to base their vote choice on the programmatic offer is likely the most demanding one. This fourth assumption of the party–mandate approach claims that voters know the parties' programmatic offer and are able to evaluate it by comparing the party offer to their own preferences. Political information about the programmatic offer of the parties is therefore seen as "one of the most important types of political knowledge" (Jenssen, Aalberg, and Aarts, 2012, p. 138). When voters did not know the parties' programmatic offer, they may unintentionally give a mandate to parties they disagree with (van der Brug, 1999, p. 129).

Only a tiny minority of voters informs themselves about the party programmatic offer by reading electoral programs (Däubler, 2014, see also the introduction). This is not surprising as electoral programs today are often book length documents. Consequentially, it is the role of mass media to disseminate the messages from parties' electoral programs. Media are the most important source of information on politics for citizens (Gelman and King, 1993; Andersen, Tilley, and Heath, 2005). Even voters who do not consume any mass media on a regular basis themselves, but instead get their information through interpersonal communication, are likely to be influenced indirectly by media coverage. The flow of information from mass media is described as a two step process where opinion leaders are exposed to media content and redistribute this information to less involved citizens (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1948; Schmitt-Beck, 2000).

The importance of mass media in regard to electoral programs in the process of political representation can be best illustrated along the so-called life cycle of manifestos (see figure 2.1 and Dolezal et al., 2012): Parties draft manifestos in a long internal process. Then, they are enacted by authoritative bodies of the party and published before the elections. Their content is picked up by the media and disseminated to voters. Voters evaluate the different programs and base their vote choice on it. A party's influence in parliament should be shaped by the amount of support (share of votes) a party's program attracts at the elections. During coalition negotiations following the elections, the manifestos should serve as a guideline for the coalition agreement. When finally the cabinet is formed, the government should stick to the coalition agreement and implement the program.

Figure 2.1: Life cycle of electoral programs



Source: Adapted from Dolezal et al. (2012)

Research illustrated above (see section 2.3) found evidence for many steps in this cycle. This cycle model makes clear that if electoral programs should foster a party mandate model of representation, this cycle must not be broken. If electoral programs should work as a contract, all these steps must (at least to a certain degree) be observed. If one of the steps is not fulfilled the role of electoral programs is meaningless in all later steps. If for example the coalition agreement is not implemented by the government, then manifestos have no impact on policy-making and can't foster a mandate view of representation. Or, if a party has no electoral program or equivalent document, voters can't evaluate a party based on its program and the choice for the party can't be shaped by the policy preferences of citizens. This cycle idea also highlights the importance of the mediation assumption. If media coverage did not reflect the parties' electoral programs, citizens had no chance to base their vote choice on evaluations of the parties' programs. Consequentially, a party's strength would not reflect the distribution of cit-

izen preferences in parliament. The government would be formed by parties not representing voters' preferences.

The claim that the coverage of electoral programs by mass media is essential is directly derived from the party-mandate model of political representation. When conceptualizing democracy and/or political representation differently, this might lead to different expectations about the function of mass media (Trappel, 2011; Martinsen, 2009). When either conceptualizing representation not as a process of authorization or when conceptualizing democracy not as competitive, but as deliberative or participatory, the expectations towards journalists drastically change and the mediation assumption might not matter. Deliberative democracy for example assumes consensus-oriented, open-minded citizens that would change their opinions based on arguments. Accordingly, journalists should fosters discussion that include the opinion and voices of citizens, not only elite actors. Mass media would serve as a forum and guarantee a rational discussion where the best arguments become accepted (Strömbäck, 2005). In contrast, competitive democracy assumes that political parties compete over power. According to such understanding, political elites act while citizens rather react to elite behavior. Then, it becomes important that political elites provide different alternatives on what problems are important and how problems should be solved. The role of the media can then clearly be summarized as follows: if the media does not inform voters on parties' electoral programs, elections cannot serve as instruments of political representation.

2.4 Past Research and Shortcomings

In the following I will review the existing studies that explicitly used or compared electoral programs and media coverage. Prior research looked at different aspects of manifesto coverage by the mass media: coverag on party pledges, common agendas, reported agendas of parties and reported party positions. An analysis of media coverage and party manifestos at the Irish national elections in 2002 that a large amount of pledges made in manifesto is never covered by mass media. Costello and Thomson (2008) analyzed the news coverage of the Irish Times during the three weeks prior the elections searching for the 400 socio-economic pledges the Irish parties have made in their manifestos. 60% of the pledges made in the manifesto were never mentioned by the Irish Times. Around 30% were mentioned once. The remaining 11% were mentioned more than once during the period of analysis. A study on German national elections 2005 produced similar results (Maurer, 2007). Around 38% percent of all socio-economic promises made by all established parties in their electoral programs were covered at

least once by at least one of four newspapers[1]. The quality newspapers SZ and FAZ mentioned 26 and 23% of the statements at least once. The share of statements on which media cover on average at least once a week – a rhythm were voters might be able to remember a party's electoral promise at the end of the campaign – is below 5%. A similar study on programs and media coverage in Bulgaria came to even more pessimistic conclusions (Kostadinova, 2015). An analysis of the campaign coverage in six different newspapers from seven elections in Bulgaria identified that between zero and close to half of a party's pledges are covered. However, on average only around 10% of the statements are covered at least once in one of the newspapers (Kostadinova, 2015).

Marcinkowski (1998) analyzed the congruence between media coverage of four national quality newspapers and the electoral programs of Greens, SPD, CDU and FDP in Germany for the elections in 1983 and 1987 and found that media coverage and the parties agendas are in fact correlated, but to a lower degree for the smaller parties. He admits that the congruences of agendas say nothing about the causality or direction of this relationship. Furthermore he hardly analyzes differences between the four newspapers although differences in the selection of topics are quite distinct between different newspapers and may be due to ideological differences of media outlets (Eilders, 2000). In a similar study, Kleinnijenhuis and Rietberg (1995) have addressed the question of directionality. They conducted a study based on three national elections in the Netherlands between 1980 and 1986. They measured a party's agenda using a party's issue emphasis in manifestos, the media agenda by analyzing issues in press articles, and the public agenda by voter surveys. They found that the agenda setting process between these three actors groups is best described as a top-down process where parties set the media agenda which again influences the public agenda. Their study indicates that manifesto do have an impact on media content which again can prime citizens. However, it lacked to differentiate these effects between parties and outlets. Lots of studies on agenda building either aggregated the parties' agendas to one single political agenda or the agendas of different media outlets to one average media agenda (or even both). This does not account for the systematic interaction between parties and media organizations. The crafting of political news messages is a process of interaction between media professionals and politicians. Therefore, one has to account for differences between parties and between media organizations, but also for the different interactions between the pairs of them. Ideological closeness or a common audience of parties and media organization may change the interaction between the two actor groups. A left-wing newspaper might cover a left-wing party differently than a right-wing party.

[1] Two national broadsheet newspapers (FAZ, SZ), one local newspaper(Mainzer Allgemeine Zeitung), and a tabloid (BILD).

Moreover, it only addressed the question of which issues from manifestos make it on the agenda, but not how and whether parties are associated with these issues in media coverage. There are a few studies that explicitly addressed how parties are associated with issues in media coverage. In an analysis based on the 2002 German electoral campaign, Eilders et al. (2004) found that parties are presented with diverse issue profiles in the media that can be linked back to their competences. Similarly, Walgrave and Swert (2007) confirmed for three elections in Flanders that media systematically link parties and issues in their media coverage. Moreover, they could show that these linkages matter for voters' issue handling evaluations of parties. However, it is not clear whether these associations precisely reflect parties' issue emphasis strategies in parties' manifestos. Research that looked at parties issue emphasis strategies across different channels of communication rather raised doubts about this. Parties rather emphasize different issues on different channels than trying to "stay on message" across channels (Elmelund-Præstekær, 2011; Tresch, Lefevere, and Walgrave, 2017; Norris et al., 1999). An extensive study on the reflection of electoral pledges in media content also did not indicate that media rather presents pledges on issues emphasized by parties. In her study on Bulgaria, Kostadinova (2015) also did not find any evidence that media rather pick pledges from issues that are emphasized by parties. In a mostly methodologically motivated study, Helbling and Tresch (2011) compare parties' issue emphasis on european integration with how often parties are associated in media coverage with european integration. They find no association between issue emphasis in the manifestos and party–issue linkages in media coverage.

However, Helbling and Tresch (2011) found a correlation between a party's position on the issue of European integration in its manifesto and how a party is portrayed by the media on european integration. Schlipphak (2011) similarly addressed parties' positions in manifestos and media coverage. However, his interest was more substantively motivated. He was interested whether the shift of the German Social Democratic Party after 2002 – often associated with the Agenda 2010 and the labor market reforms – was perceived by voters and shaped by media coverage. Methodologically, he counted co-appearances of 'left' and 'right' issues with parties using a computerized dictionary-based approach to measure parties' positions in media coverage. He finds no support for an influence of the framing of media coverage of parties' positions on voters' perceived positions. In general one can conclude that the number of studies that measures party positions based on media coverage is very small. The large content analytical endeavor by Kriesi et al. (2008; 2012) is one of the few exceptions. They argued in favor of measuring party positions with media coverage instead of relying on manifestos claiming that this is much closer to what voters perceive. With the exception of Helbling and Tresch (2011) and despite the public availability of this data, their argument was never empirically evaluated.

Almost all prior studies lack a comparative perspective on the question whether and how the media inform about the parties' programmatic offer. Prior research is almost completely based on individual countries and sometimes even on a single electoral campaign: for example prior research is based on one election (Maurer, 2007), two elections (Marcinkowski, 1998) or three elections (Schlipphak, 2011) in Germany, three elections in the Netherlands (Kleinnijenhuis and Rietberg, 1995) three elections in Flanders (Belgium) (Walgrave and Swert, 2007), and seven elections in Bulgaria (Kostadinova, 2015). The study by Helbling and Tresch (2011) is an exception as it is based on five countries and two elections each. However, it is limited to the issue of European integration - an important, but not very representative issue. Broadening the coverage of the study in terms of countries and electoral campaigns has two major advantages: First, it allows to study systematic differences between countries with different party or media systems. What might be true for a two-party system might not necessarily the case for a highly fragmented party system and vice versa. Second, a comparative perspective permits to replace idiosyncratic explanations with theoretical ones by replacing names of parties and media outlets with variables that capture their characteristics. While most existing studies look at the media coverage from outlet X on the program of party A, they lack to identify the characteristics of X and A that cause such coverage.

Chapter 3

The Manifesto–Media Link

The third chapter introduces the concept of the manifesto–media link that permits to analyze the media coverage of manifestos. I argue that theories of party competition hint to the aspects of manifestos that are most relevant for parties and voters. They point to a multi-dimensional concept that covers different aspects of the programmatic offer. The manifesto–media link captures three different dimensions of the media coverage of manifesto messages: the congruence of agendas between electoral programs and media coverage during the electoral campaign, the relationship between a party's issue strategies and the linkage of parties and issues in media coverage, and the framing of parties in media coverage as left or right and its correspondence with the focal party's statements in its electoral program. The manifesto–media link can be measured in a dyadic way between the coverage of a specific media outlet and a specific manifesto published at the same elections. This allows to put explanatory factors at different levels of analysis. Theories on media selection reviewed here too point to various factors that might strengthen or weaken the manifesto–media link. Furthermore the chapter also illustrates the designs of the three empirical chapters which analyze each one of the dimensions of the manifesto–media link. The chapter concludes with a review of the methodological debate concerning how to measure party preferences using manifesto data and discusses potential pitfalls and challenges in comparing manifesto and media data.

3.1 Party Competition and the Programmatic Offer

This section should provide a more precise understanding of what I mean when I speak of political parties and their programmatic offers.

Past research has led to a multitude of definitions of what a political party is (for a list of competing definitions see White, 2006). These differences are a result of mutiple functions parties fulfill and different goals

they pursue. Early research on parties highlighted the wish of parties to gain office. Schattschneider (1942–1977, p. 35) for example defined parties as "an organized attempt to get power". Similarly but more recently, Ware defined them as seeking "influence in a state, often by attempting to occupy positions in government" (Ware, 1996, p. 5).

Nowadays, the differentiation of three main party goals *policy*, *office* and *vote* has become canonical (Strom, 1990). The priority of these goals however is debated. One could for example assume that parties formulate policy aims to gain office, or that parties seek office to implement policy aims (Budge and Laver, 1986). Especially in multi-party systems with coalition governments there are usually trade-offs between these goals. Coalition agreements where parties have to decide whether they enter a government which does not (as it is almost always the case) totally reflect their policy aims is an example for such trade-off between the goals of policy and office. Despite this theoretical triad of party goals, I understand parties as primarily vote-seeking because votes are a necessary goal to achieve office or policy. Without winning at least a minimum amount of votes, parties can neither gain office nor influence policy. Therefore, this study conceptualizes parties as vote-maximizing actors.

Party's most important strategy to maximize votes is their programmatic offer. Parties are expected to make a programmatic offer that gets them the maximum number of votes. Finding the best strategy certainly is not easy for parties as parties compete with other parties. Past research on the competition between political parties developed two competing approaches that deal with a party's programmatic offer that are linked to the idea of a party mandate: First, the spatial theory of party competition is connected to the idea of an ideological mandate. Second, the saliency theory is linked to the idea of a mandate as a set of issue priorities.

Spatial Theory of Party Competition

The spatial approach to party competition and voting behavior (Downs, 1957) assumes that parties compete for voters by offering different policy alternatives for social problems and issues. The use of nuclear power is for example such an issue. Some parties favor it to keep the costs of energy low, other parties are against nuclear power because of the related risks of a nuclear catastrophe and the problems of nuclear garbage. Another example is the current immigration crisis. Some parties are in favor of letting more immigrants come to the country, others want to restrict the number of immigrants. These different issues can be conceptualized as dimensions and policy alternatives as positions on these dimensions. The more similar two policy alternatives, the closer the positions on the issue dimension. Parties can than be located on these different dimensions according to their favored policy alternative.

The spatial approach to party competition assumes that positions taken by different parties on different issues correlate with a single dimension: the ideological left-right dimension. Left and right are common labels used in communication by and on parties as well as a heuristic for voters to locate themselves and parties in a common ideological space (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990). The labels "left" and "right" are centuries old and date back to the French revolution in 1789. In the Assemblée nationale, royalists sat on the right side of parliament and supporters of the revolution on the left. More than 200 years later, the terms left and right still structure our thinking and communication about politics and political parties. If we get to know a party is left-wing (right-wing), we automatically associate certain attributes and positions to this party. The left-right dimension serves voters as an information shortcut because they do not have to seek information about parties' stances on all issues. Instead they use the left-right dimension to make sense out of politics, parties and issues.

Voters can equally be located on the left-right dimension based on the policy alternative they favor. The distance between a voter's position and the parties' positions is decisive for a voter's electoral choice. Voters are expected to vote for the party that is most proximate to them on the left-right dimension. Some scholars criticize the assumption that the left-right dimension captures most political issues and conflicts within a society and claim the existence of an (at least) two-dimensional policy space (see for example (Kriesi et al., 2008). The left-right dimension lost some of its power and relevance over the last decades. However, this weakening is mostly restricted to the demand-side of politics (Knutsen, 1998; Van Der Brug and Van Spanje, 2009). Even if at first, new issues are often orthogonal to the left-right dimension, they are often step by step integrated into the left-right dimension (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990; Van Der Brug and Van Spanje, 2009).

The spatial approach to party competition makes predictions on parties' position-*taking*. The distribution of voters and parties on the left-right dimension and the parties' position decide about which party will win or loose the election. In multi-party systems parties face the challenge that they act under uncertainty because they do not know the excact distribution of voters across the left-right dimension (Budge, 1994). They can only "guess" how to change their position to attract more votes based on signals they receive about the voters' preferences and the other parties' strategies.

Empirical research on parties' position changes on the left-right dimension made extensive use of left-right positions derived from electoral programs (Budge et al., 2001; Klingemann et al., 2006; Volkens et al., 2015a and for an overview see Adams, 2012). This research tradition found that parties use such signals and respond systematically to various events such as past election results (Somer-Topcu, 2009), rival parties' policy shifts (Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009b), and changes in public opinion (Adams et al., 2004).

Saliency Theory and Issue-Ownership

In contrast to the spatial approach to party competition that claims that parties take different stances on the same issues, Stokes (1963) argued that on various issues parties do not have different stances. He therefore introduced the – nowadays – widely accepted differentiation of two types of issues: *position issues* where parties compete with different policy alternatives and *valence issues*, where parties do not take different positions. The size of the welfare state is for example a positional issue because left-wing parties generally favor more redistribution and right-wing parties less redistribution. In contrast, the protection of the environment is a valence issue because environmental protection is a shared goal of all parties. Although the appropriate means to reach such a goal differ between parties, no party advocates the "destruction" of the environment.

Budge and Farlie (1983) picked up that idea and claimed that party competition is not shaped by parties taking different stances on the same issues, but by emphasizing different issues to a different degree. "Rather than promoting an educational dialogue, parties talk past each other." (Budge and Farlie, 1983, p. 24). Recently, many scholars picked up this idea and claimed a change from a positional ideological competition to an issue-based approach of party competition (Green-Pedersen, 2007; Egan, 2013; Green and Hobolt, 2008). Where spatial theory tries to explain position-taking of parties, saliency theory tries to explain why some parties emphasize some issues more than others.

The most prominent approach is the theory of issue-ownership. According to this theory, parties profit from some issues being salient among the public and suffer from other issues. Parties are said to "own" issues which are advantageous to them – issues a party profits from when they are salient in the public (Petrocik, 1996). The causes of issue-ownership are manifold: This can be a good issue handling reputation or a positive track record on an issue. Green parties are often considered particularly competent to deal with environmental issues and liberal or right-wing parties are often considered the most competent to decrease unemployment. Parties can also profit from their stance on an issue if for example their issue position is shared by their core electorate and a majority of the electorate.

According to the issue-ownership theory, issue emphasis strategies matter for the outcome of elections because voters evaluate parties based on issues they consider salient (Bélanger and Meguid, 2008; Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1994). If voters consider the economy as a salient issue, they will evaluate parties based on their competence on improving the state of the economy. Similarly, if they consider the environment as the most important issue, they will evaluate parties based on their competence on environmental issues. If competence evaluations differ between parties across issues, these two evaluations will likely lead to different electoral choices. Therefore, par-

ties try to set "owned" issues on the public agenda by emphasizing these issues in their campaign. Winning elections then is ultimately a struggle about shaping the public agenda.

Traditional issue–ownership was critiziced because it cannot explain why parties engage a lot on the same issues or why parties engage at all on issues they do not own (Sigelman and Buell, 2004). Moreover, as ownership of issues was originally considered as relatively stable, this approach can hardly explain large differences in parties' issue emphasis strategies over time. More recent studies suggest that issue-ownership is dynamic and partial instead of stable and exclusive (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans, 2009; Geys, 2012). Parties need to constantly communicate on their issues to maintain their ownership, otherwise other parties can steal their issue–ownership by issue treespassing (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans, 2009; Holian, 2004). So, parties also emphasize issues to maintain or gain ownership of issues.

Moreover, A further observation made by scholars of issue emphasis is that parties try to ride on the wave of public concern. Parties emphasise issues that are considered as salient by the public (Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1994; Wagner and Meyer, 2014; Klüver and Spoon, 2016; Spoon and Klüver, 2014). Finally, parties emphasize issues in response to other parties' issue emphasis strategies. The party-system agenda approach suggests that parties are constrained and cannot deliberately emphasize and downplay issues to their liking. In particular government parties are constrained by the issues brought up by competing parties as government parties are responsible for problems and issues and can hardly neglect issues as they would risk to loose credibility (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010; Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2015). Established mainstream parties can have incentives to emphasize the issues brought up by new challenger parties if these challengers are not the issue owners (Abou-Chadi, 2016).

One can conclude that issue emphasis is of dual use. On the one hand, emphasizing (or dowplaying) a certain issue is a party's attempt to set an issue on the public agenda (or to avoid it). On the other hand, emphasizing an issue can also be an attempt to gain or maintain ownership of an issue.

Information on the Programmatic Offer

Certainly, pledges and concrete issue positions are also an important aspect of the party mandate as shown by lots of research on mandate fulfillment (see also section 2.1). However, there are two reasons why I do not follow up on the idea of a pledge mandate in the following. First, while parties' ideological positions and their emphasis is clearly linked to electoral behavior, the link between specific pledges and voters' electoral behavior is less clear and has not yet been shown to matter systematically across countries. Empirically most voters are not able to correctly locate parties on specific issues – neither at regional (Klein, 2002) or European (van der Brug and van der Eijk, 1999)

elections, nor at national elections (Westle, 2005). Instead of relying on such precise knowledge, I argue that the knowledge of specific pledges is not neccesary to make an informed rational choice and would be unrealistically demanding (Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999). Voters are expected to use belief systems, cues and cheaper heuristics to navigate in the political world (Converse, 1964). So, it is more important that voters get correct cues of the general message of a party's program than the specific knowledge of all issue positions and pledges. Second, it would be extremly difficult to compare and evaluate adequately the coverage of pledges and issue positions across countries because the kind and number of pledges made by parties are highly idiosyncratic and difficult to compare in a meaningful way across countries and elections.

Scholars studying the party–mandate approach argued that a comprehensive knowledge of the exact policy plan of a party is unrealistically demanding (Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999). I adopt this argument and claim that – instead of covering every pledge and issue positions – media must cover the major messages of a manifesto.

However, even if the media do not need to provide detailed information on every policy pledge, voters face the problem that parties programmatic offer changes over time. So, the requirements of the responsible party model are even more demanding when we take into account that parties change their programs from one to the next election. If parties change their programs, it is not sufficient that voters once know a party's program, but it is necessary that voters keep track of parties adopting new policies, parties changing their stance on certain issues or parties altering their priorities. Otherwise, voters would risk to vote for a party which might not represent their interests anymore. Party programmatic changes between adjacent elections are quite common. Parties strategically and systematically change their positions and issue emphases from one to the next election. Parties respond to electoral loss by altering their left-right position (Somer-Topcu, 2009). Moreover, they respond to changes in public opinion if the median voter shifts away from the party position (Adams et al., 2004; Adams et al., 2006; Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009b). Similarly, parties change their issue emphasis strategies for each election. They respond to changes in public opinion by "riding the wave" of public concern (Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1994): They emphasize issues considered as salient by voters to signal their responsiveness (Wagner and Meyer, 2014; Klüver and Sagarzazu, 2016). Alternatively, they change their emphasis from one to the next election because they need to respond to the rise of competing parties (Abou-Chadi, 2016) and issues brought up by their competitors (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010; Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2015). So, media must not only provide general cues of a party's programmatic offer, but provide cues that indicate changes from one to the next election.

The most important cues can be derived from the central components

of a party's programmatic offer derived from the theories outlined above. Accordingly, parties use electoral programs to send three signals to voters: First, electoral programs are an attempt to set certain issues on the public agenda. Second, electoral programs are an attempt to signal competence – in other words to gain or maintain ownership of issues. Third, electoral programs are an attempt to change or maintain an ideological left-right position. In the following section I will ilustrate the concept of the manifesto–media link that picks up these three types of signals.

3.2 The Concept of the Manifesto–Media Link

This study addresses the question whether the mass media cover the messages of electoral programs by introducing the concept of the manifesto–media link. The manifesto–media link is understood as the degree to which the coverage of a media outlet reflects the messages of a party's electoral program.

The manifesto–media link is dyadic by connecting specific media outlets with specific electoral programs and multi-dimensional covering three different aspects of programmatic reflection. First, the manifesto–media link is dyadic connecting a specific media outlet's coverage with a party's electoral program. This differs from past research that sometimes aggregated the agendas of several outlets to a single media system agenda. This dyadic conceptualization between one party and one media outlet allows to study differences in the reflection of electoral programs in media coverage due to factors located at many different levels. Party related factors may explain why some parties get their messages through more easily than others. For example government parties, which were often found to enjoy an incumbency advantage in terms of their visibility in media coverage (Green-Pedersen, Mortensen, and Thesen, 2015; Hopmann, de Vreese, and Albaek, 2011), might also have better chances to get their manifesto messages through. Then, a dyadic approach also facilitates the study of differences between media outlets. For example whether the press covers electoral programs more accurately than television or how quality media covers electoral programs differently than non-quality outlets. Finally, in a dyadic design, explanatory factors can also be located at the party-media level. A media outlet might for example favor the messages of a party with which it is affiliated.

Second, the manifesto–media link is multi-dimensional because media coverage can provide different types of cues on the content of a party's electoral programs. The concept of the manifesto–media link stands in the tradition of the responsible party model that formulates conditions which can be empirically evaluated (see also section 2.1 and Thomassen, 1994). I proceed in a similar way and formulate the manifesto–media link as three testable conditions which can be empirically evaluated. These three con-

ditions reflect the three types of signals that can be found in manifestos (manifestos as attempts to set the agenda, to signal competence and to change the left-right position). These three types of signal can be linked to three types of media content. The conditions then are:

Table 3.1: The three conditions of the manifesto–media link

Media agenda. Media coverage during the electoral campaign and electoral programs must discuss the same issues.
Party–Issue Linkages. Party–issue linkages in media coverage must reflect differences across and changes over time in parties' issue priorities stated in electoral programs.
Ideological Framing of Parties. The framing of parties in media coverage must reflect differences across and changes over time in parties' left-right positions stated in electoral programs.

The following section will briefly discuss the three conditions. The three empirical chapters of this study will each focus on one of these conditions where the current state of research is discussed more extensively.

The Media Agenda and its Congruence with the Manifesto Agenda

Agenda congruence is the first condition of the manifesto–media link. It is based on the idea that manifestos are a party's attempt to shape the public agenda. It is defined as the degree of congruence between the agenda put forward in an electoral program and the agenda of a media outlet during the electoral campaign. Agenda congruence addresses the question whether parties (in their programs) and media coverage (during the electoral campaign) discuss the same issues. Agenda congruence is high if a party's electoral program and the coverage of a specific media outlet focus on the same issues and weigh these issues similarly. Agenda congruence is low if a party and a media outlet's discourse is decoupled from each other. So, if for example party A emphasizes three major issues in its program (welfare, environment, european integration) and another party B emphasizes welfare, education and equality. If media outlet Z in its campaign coverage mostly dealt with issues related to welfare and the environment, it had a higher agenda congruence with party A than with party B. Similarly, a media outlet Y that exclusively talked about equality and the military would have a low agenda congruence with party B (because both talk about equality) and a zero congruence with party A (because they have no issue in common).

Agenda congruence is agnostic about the direction of agenda-setting processes. It is here of less importance whether congruence is due to adaptation

processes of parties to the media agenda or agenda builiding capacities of parties over the media agenda. What matters is the degree of congruence – not the direction of agenda-setting. Measuring agenda congruence at the dyadic level allows to analyze whether certain (types of) parties have it easier to get their messages through and whether some media outlets promote the agenda of specific parties.

Certainly, agenda congruence has implications for electoral behaviour. If agenda congruence is high between a party and a media outlet, this means that a media outlet promotes the issues of a party. If a focal issue is high on the media agenda, this will likely influence the public agenda (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). And again, the individual perceived salience has implications for electoral behaviour as voters tend to vote for the party they consider the issue-owner on issues they consider as salient (Bélanger and Meguid, 2008). In other words, parties try to prime voters on issues that are somehow advantageous to them (Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1994). Studies on agenda congruence even indicated that the effect of congruent agendas between media and party has stronger effects on the public agenda than the individual effects of the media agenda and the political agenda (Hayes, 2008a).

Party–Issue Linkages Reflecting Parties' Issue Emphasis Strategies in Manifestos

The impact of parties' issue emphasis on the party–issue linkages in media coverage is the second condition of the manifesto–media link. It addresses the question whether the cues provided by a media outlet about a party reflect a party's priorities of issues.

Recall, a party's emphasis is not only an attempt to set the agenda – to increase the saliency of an issue in the public – but also an attempt to signal competence and thereby an attempt to gain or maintain ownership of an issue. Parties' issue emphasis can provide cues on how a party set its budgetary priorities. Accordingly, it is crucial that media do not only share a common agenda, but that they also provide cues about the issue priorities of parties.

The relevant type of media content by which media reflect parties' issue priorities are the linkages of issues with parties in media coverage. One can consider these party–issue linkages as the framing of issues *with* parties by a media outlet. In contrast to agenda-setting theory, framing theory does not deal with the question of whether an issue is discussed or not, but in what way the media discusses specific issues. Accordingly, Entman summarized the idea of framing as " to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). When election news coverage links actors to issues, these actors can also be considered as issue frames – here called *party–issue linkages* as they connect political parties to political issues and vice versa (Walgrave and Swert, 2007).

Party–issue linkages are found to shape voters' perceptions of parties, as well as of issues and frames, and thereby affect electoral choices and the electoral competition. Party–issue linkages in media coverage are particularly important for a party's issue ownership. If a party manages to be linked to an issue in the election coverage, it may gain ownership of new issues and maintain or reinforce existing ownership of issues (Walgrave and Swert, 2007; Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans, 2009; Tresch, Lefevere, and Walgrave, 2015).

While agenda congruence looks at the question of whether the agenda of a media outlet and the agenda put forward in an electoral program are the same, emphasis reflection looks at whether the media portray a party as the party states its own priorities in its electoral program.

Ideological Framing of Parties in Media Coverage and its Correspondence with Left-Right Positions in Manifestos

The third condition of the manifesto media link is the correspondence of parties' ideological left-right positions from manifestos with reported left-right positions in media coverage. Parties' position on an ideological left-right dimension are a crucial element of a party's programmatic offer. Left-right positions are at the core of the spatial theory of party competition and electoral behavior (Downs, 1957).

This approach to party competition assumes that the parties' and voters positions on various issues are highly correlated with a latent left-right dimension. As a party's position on a left-right dimension is a good estimate of a party's position on many issues, voters can use parties' left-right positions as a heuristic to evaluate parties. Reported left-right positions address the question how media portray parties in media coverage. Media can provide cues on where a party stands on a left-right position by associating a party with certain issues and positions in its coverage. A party can be portrayed as left-wing by mass media if reporting systematically associates a pary with left-wing issues and positions such as the extension of the welfare state and the introduction or augmentation of a minimun wage. Similarly, a party can be portrayed as right-wing when it is often mentioned in the context of right-wing issues and positions such as domestic security, welfare state retrenchment and the reduction of taxes (Schlipphak, 2011). Reported left-right positions of parties are expected to influence the perceived left-right positions and thereby have an impact on voters' electoral behavior.

One goal of this study is to analyze variation in the manifesto–media link. Therefore, the next section reviews prior research that identified factors that influence media coverage in order to explain differences in the strenght of the manifesto–media link in the following section.

3.3 The Selectivity of Mass Media

Mass media select and filter information. As the pages in newspapers and the time available in radio and television are limited, mass media necessarily need to filter. Journalists are confronted with a flood of incoming information and events. Alone the number of press releases issued by ministries, parties, interest groups, business, and other actors highly exceeds the scope of any news format every day. Additionally, journalists receive the news wires from one or several news agencies that similarly exceeds what can be published in any news format on a single day. Usually, only a tiny fraction of agency and press releases end up being published as an article or news story. Journalists cannot avoid to select and prioritize certain events or press releases over others. This selection process is one of the main tasks of most journalists. Since early on, communication research has studied this selection process and tried to identify why and how journalists decide on what to cover and what not to cover. Prior research identified numerous determinants of the media selection process. Factors influencing the media selection process and thereby media content can be placed on various different analytical levels (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991):

First, the individual level includes a journalist's subjective judgments and preferences for a specific story. One of the earliest study on media selection revealed that a journalists' individual preferences are highly decisive for what gets covered in the news and what not. In a pioneer study, White (1950) asked a newspaper editor to annotate during one week all non-used agency wires with the reason why he ignored them. These annotations and the comparison of selected and non-selected revealed that news wires were often not covered due to the journalist's individual preferences and subjective judgments. White described the journalist's role as a powerful "gate keeper" who decides whether a story passes the media gates or not. Journalist's individual partisanship may also shade media coverage in favor of their preferred party (Patterson and Donsbach, 1996). However, the individual level perspective that emphasizes the influence of journalists' individual preferences cannot explain why different media outlets (that employ different journalists) often cover very similar stories. Quite often the front pages of daily newspapers cover the same stories. It seems unlikely that the reason for the similarity in coverage is the similar taste for specific stories of a couple of journalists working at very different media outlets.

Factors at the second level – the level of journalistic routines – can better explain why media agendas across outlets often converge. News factor theory tries to explain why certain types of events are more often covered than others by most media outlets. The goal is the identification of factors that make events more newsworthy. News factors are attributes of events, persons or issues which increase the newsworthiness of a story (Maier, Stengel, and Marschall, 2010, p.18). The more factors can be attributed to an event

and the more pronounced these factors, the higher the probability that an event will be covered by the news (Galtung and Ruge, 1965) – the higher its news value. News factors are for example the status of a country, person or institution, the scope and (cultural and geographical) proximity of a story in regard to the audience, the use of violence or the existence of a controversy (for more, see Schulz, 2011, ch. 4.3.1). News factors matter at several stages in the chain of media communication: whether news agencies pick up an issue or event, whether media picks up news wire, how much space a story is given, where a story is placed, whether consumers read or watch it and whether they remember it (Eilders, 2006). In regard to the competition between political parties, two news factors matter most. First, parties in government receive more media attention than parties in opposition. This "incumbency bonus" was found in several countries and in the coverage of various media organizations (Hopmann, de Vreese, and Albaek, 2011; Hopmann, Van Aelst, and Legnante, 2012; but see also Green-Pedersen, Mortensen, and Thesen, 2015). It seems rather to be the product of media routines than a media outlet's hidden support of a party in government. Being in government increases the prominence and relevance of a party and therefore its visibility in media coverage. Second, media give more attention to stories and events that can be framed as a conflict (Pas and Vliegenthart, 2016). Media are more likely to cover an issue if parties controversially discuss the issues than if there is a consensus on the issue. Moreover, in general media cover electoral campaigns more extensively if the issues at stake are contested between parties (Schuck et al., 2011). Media routines are based on professional journalistic norms and internalized by most journalists within a country. However, routines certainly differ between the different types of media. Daily newspapers produce different content than weeklies and–obviously–very different content than a tv news broadcast. Accordingly, they select and favor different stories.

The third analytical level deals with factors related to the organization of a media outlet. In contrast to the individual and the routine level it deals with explanatory factors that guide the work of several journalists working for the same media outlet. The most prominent factor pointed out by existing research is the influence of media owners. They can exert a significant influence on the media content. Although owners rarely produce media content on their own, they have many means to influence media coverage of their outlets. They can hire and fire editors and journalists more or less to their taste. As journalists are dependent on the job, they produce content to the liking of the owners. It is not only the individual preferences of the owner, but also the structure of the ownership that influences media coverage (Dunaway, 2012). Owners exert more influence if ownership of a media outlet is concentrated in the hands of a few (Hanretty, 2014).

The fourth level refers to factors external to the media organizations. The first external factor is a media's outlet audience. Journalists are con-

strained by their readers and listeners. Different media outlets can have very different audiences. Here, two important aspects how audiences can differ should be highlighted. First, in their interest in political affairs. Readers of the BILD and consumers of Phönix (a public service news broadcasting channel that sends news and documentaries as well as parliamentary debates) have likely very different levels of political interest. Second, audiences can differ in respect to their partisanship and their general political orientation. For example readers of the SZ or the tageszeitung in Germany are usually more left-wing than readers of the WELT or the FAZ. Similarly in the US, republicans are more likely to watch FOX news than democrats (DellaVigna and Kaplan, 2007). Certainly the relationship between audience political orientation and political orientation of a media outlet is bi-directional. Consumers might become more partisan by consuming politically biased news, however they also might have chosen a certain outlet for its political orientation from the start. Either way, as consumers can easily switch to the coverage of a different media outlet if the coverage of their current does not support their own views, journalists are constrained to produce content that is in line with the preferences of its audience.

An additional external influential factors are the sources of journalists. Although the relationship between journalists and their sources is often described as one of mutual dependence, sources can exert a big influence on media content. Many societal actors try to influence media coverage. First of all parties try to manipulate the media agenda and media coverage to their advantage by setting issues on the media agenda, by spinning debates and by attacking their competitors (Cobb and Elder, 1971). Different sources do not exert the same influence on journalists. Relevant parties are for example more likely to influence the media agenda than minor parties (Hopmann et al., 2010a).

Finally, the last level points to factors that are located at the system level. Differences between political systems and media systems can influence media selection. Political systems differ for example in being more consensus-oriented or more majoritarian. Similar, countries differ in the degree of fragmentation of party system or the electoral system. Similarly, media systems differ in their way how closely the media systems is aligned with the political system, how the state intervenes in the media system, the degree of professionalization of journalism (Hallin and Mancini, 2004) or in general the type of political communication culture (Pfetsch, 2004).

The consequences of these influences on media content were studied under the label of media bias. The core assumption and problem studied by media bias is that bias in media coverage favors a party, interest group or a certain argument which might influence citizens' perception or their stance on an issue, and ultimately alter citizens' electoral choice. Media bias is a very broad concept and can take a variety of forms: Giving more weight to a specific opinion or position, as well as giving simply more space to certain

persons or organizations, being less critical towards certain arguments, or also not covering something can all be forms of media bias (Baron, 2006). Bias can be defined as the systematic and frequent occurrence of slant in the same direction (Entman, 2007).

The problem in many studies on bias is that neither the empirical point of reference nor the theoretical concept is very clear. Bias is something that is "relative to the truth" (Baron, 2006, p. 4), however the "truth" is hard to measure. This leads also to an empirical problem: "The problem with measuring bias is that there are no suitable references with which we can compare media content." (Shoemaker, 1991, p. 40).

The various influential factors discussed above can produce two different types of bias: structural bias and partisan bias (Hofstetter, 1976). The difference between the two relates to the intentions of bias:

> "If partisan bias focuses on media actors, their ideological beliefs and how they affect the news coverage, then structural bias focuses on journalistic norms with regards to their interaction with the processes and circumstances of news production."(Strömbäck and Shehata, 2007, p. 799)

The sources of partisan bias can be the partisanship of journalists, media owners, the audience, organizational ties between a media outlet and a party or a shared ideology. In contrast, sources of structural bias are media routines, the power of journalistic norms, the economic situation of a media outlet, and the wider media environment and media system.

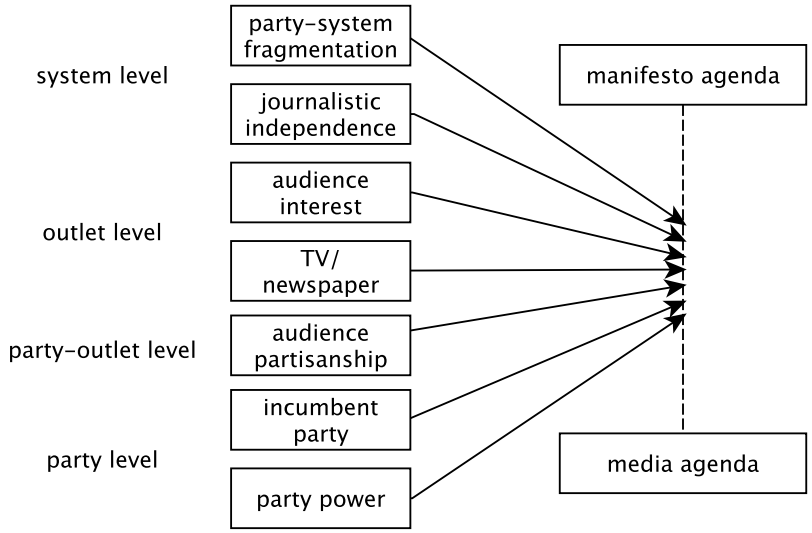
This problem of the lack of a reference point is overcome in this study as the reference point here are the electoral programs. The goal then is to identify whether some of the factors listed above can explain variation in the strength of the manifesto–media link. The following section briefly illustrates the research design of the empirical chapters.

3.4 Causes and Consequences of the Manifesto–Media Link

The empirical chapters of this study will each focus on one condition of the manifesto–media link. Chapter 4 addresses the first condition of the manifesto–media link: the congruence of the agendas put forward by parties compared to the media agenda. Past research has widely found that parties and media discuss similar issues – however to varying degrees and often based on parties' press releases instead of electoral programs (Brandenburg, 2005; Brandenburg, 2006; Ridout and Mellen, 2007; Hayes, 2008b). Therefore, the focus in this chapter lies on the determinants of agenda congruence

which is defined as the degree of similarity between a specific party's manifesto agenda and the agenda of a specific media outlet during the electoral campaign (Ridout and Mellen, 2007, see also).

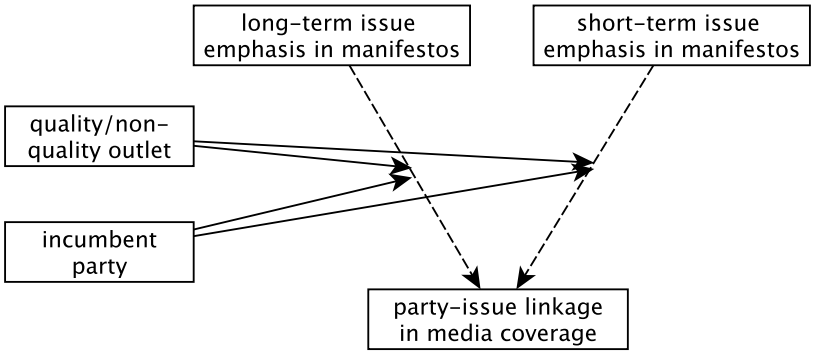
Figure 3.1: Chapter 4: Party Agendas and Media Agendas



The determinaints of agenda congruence can be located at different analytical levels: the system level, the party level and the outlet level. Figure 3.1 schematically illustrates the theoretical model (the manifesto–media link is the dashed line). This model is tested using a large cross-national dataset on the electoral campaign in 27 countries for the 2009 European parliamentary elections. The dataset combines data from the Euromanifesto project (Braun, Mikhaylov, and Schmitt, 2010) and data from the media component of the European Election Study (Schuck et al., 2010).

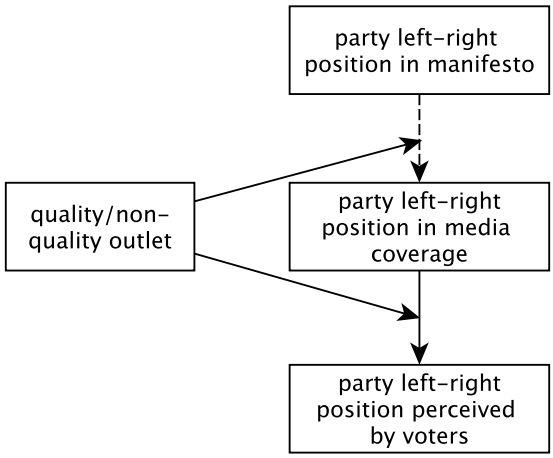
Chapter 5 looks at party–issue linkages in election news coverage–the second condition of the manifesto–media link. Past research raised doubts whether parties' emphasis in manifestos systematically influence the linkage of parties and issues in media coverage (Helbling and Tresch, 2011; Kostadinova, 2015). The chapter revisits this link by differentiating between short- and long-term issue emphasis. Moreover, the model presented here control for various influential factors such as the overall salience of an issue and the general visibility of a party that might have suppressed the relationship between issue emphasis and party–issue linkages in former studies. The chapter also addresses the question whether the effect of issue emphasis on party–issue linkages is conditioned or moderated by the type of media outlet or the status of the party (see also figure 3.2). The Manifesto Project

Figure 3.2: Chapter 5: Party Strategies and Party–Issue Linkages



(Volkens et al., 2016) and the project National Political Change in a Globalizing World by (Kriesi et al., 2012a) serve as the empirical data. The sample covers manifestos and media coverage from five different countries (Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK) at 22 elections (from 1991 to 2007).

Figure 3.3: Chapter 6: Stated, Reported and Perceived Left-Right Positions



Chapter 6 analyses the portrayal of parties as left or right in media coverage. The focus lies on the causes and consequences of parties' reported left-right positions in media coverage. These are expected to be a consequence of parties' left-right statements in electoral programs and a cause for voters' perceived party images. The type of media outlet act as a moderating factor. Figure 3.3 illustrates this expected relationship. So, the mass media

are expected to act as mediator in the voters' perception of parties' left-right positions in manifestos. The data used to test this model is based on almost the same dataset that was used for the analysis in chapter 5 supplemented by survey data from national election surveys.

3.5 Measuring Party Positions and Issue Emphasis in Manifestos

The measurement of a party's issue emphasis strategy and a party's left-right position in electoral programs is extremely popular, but highly controversial.

Electoral programs have been used by many scholars as a source of party's preferences – not only by the researchers of the Manifesto Research Group and their successors (see also below). The Comparative Agendas Project for example has also analyzed electoral programs to measure parties' issue agendas. Methods of automatic content analysis have been successfully applied to electoral programs to measure parties' position on a left-right scale or similar aggregate dimensions of political competition (Laver and Garry, 2000). Moreover, the Comparative Party Pledges Group has coded election promises from electoral programs (Thomson et al., 2016).

The project that is probably most strongly associated with electoral programs is the Manifesto Project.[1] This project has its origin in 1979 when the Manifesto Research Group (MRG) was founded. The group members shared the common interest to analyze electoral programs in their countries. The MRG agreed on a common coding scheme and started to collect and code manifestos in their home countries (mostly OECD countries). The group published its first book in 1987 (Budge, Robertson, and Hearl, 1987). Little later in 1989, the project moved to the WZB Berlin Social Science Center and was renamed to Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP). Besides a stronger centralization of the data collection, the project also extended its collection and coding efforts to the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. In 2001 the project published the pooled dataset on a CD-ROM that accompanied a book (Budge, 2001). Since then, the data was used by many scholars in hundreds of publications to address a diversity of research questions (Volkens et al., 2015a). The Manifesto Project dataset had the unique advantage that it provided extremely long time series (since 1945) on party's preferences for a large number of countries and parties thereby allowing large-N comparative party research. In 2009 the project gained a grant by the German Research Foundation and was renamed to Manifesto Research on Political Representation (MARPOR).[2]

The methodology of the Manifesto Project slightly developed over time,

[1] Disclaimer: The author is a research fellow in the Manifesto Project.

[2] In the following, I will use the umbrella term Manifesto Project when referring to the work and methodology of the MRG, the CMP and MARPOR.

but at its core remained very stable. Country experts collect the electoral programs of all major parties for national parliamentary lower-house elections. The documents are split into statements (quasi-sentences) and each statement is attributed to a coding category. The core versions of the category scheme covers 56 categories covering the most important policy goals and issues, ranging from foreign policy over economic goals to welfare state positions and group-specific policies (see table 3.2). The codes are then summed up per category and manifesto and put in relation to the total number of quasi-sentences of an electoral program. This allows statements of the assigned importance or weight of specific goals, issues and policies.

However, these different steps in the methodology of the Manifesto Project were considerably cricitized by various scholars. As the Manifesto Project Dataset and the Euromanifesto Data are also the fundament for this study, I will review some points of critique and illustrate whether and how they can be tackled.

Document Selection

In general, the Manifesto Project collects and codes electoral programs. However, the collection of the Manifesto Project was criticized for including many documents that are not electoral programs. Large parts of the Danish documents for example are campaign leaflets, the collection in Israel is mostly based on newspaper articles and many documents anaylzed in Greece are leader speeches (Gemenis, 2012; Hansen, 2008). The use of proxy documents is most common in countries with a weakly pronounced manifesto culture, young parties and young democracies. In many of these problematic cases the Manifesto Project decided to code them simply because the parties did not publish a "true" manifesto. Gemenis claims that different document types such as leader speeches produce a systematic centrist bias in left-right estimates (Gemenis, 2012). Methodological research showed that specific scaling procedures can account for the centrist bias in proxy documents and that this bias is only present in certain types of proxy documents (Benoit et al., 2012; Budge and McDonald, 2012; Merz and Regel, 2013b). Moreovoer, the analyses in the empirical chapters are unlikely to suffer from biased estimates due to the use of proxy documents. The countries covered in the latter two empirical chapters (UK, Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Austria) are countries that since long have a very well established culture of publishing electoral programs. The first empirical chapter uses data from parties' electoral programs from 27 European countries for the European parliamentary elections held in 2009 published by the Euromanifesto Project – a "sister-project" of the Manifesto Project that codes electoral programs for European parliamentary elections. Even in Central and Eastern Europe with the relatively young democracies, nowadays there is a strong tradition of publishing electoral programs, and the

Table 3.2: Manifesto coding scheme

Domain 1: External Relations
101 Foreign Special Relationships: pos.
102 Foreign Special Relationships: neg.
103 Anti-Imperialism: pos.
104 Military: pos.
105 Military: neg.
106 Peace: pos.
107 Internationalism: pos.
108 European Integration: pos.
109 Internationalism: neg.
110 European Integration: neg.

Domain 2: Freedom and Democracy
201 Freedom and Human Rights: pos.
202 Democracy: pos.
203 Constitutionalism: pos.
204 Constitutionalism: neg.

Domain 3: Political System
301 Decentralisation: pos.
302 Centralisation: pos.
303 Governmental and Administrative Efficiency: pos.
304 Political Corruption: neg.
305 Political Authority: pos.

Domain 4: Economy
401 Free Enterprise: pos.
402 Incentives: pos.
403 Market Regulation: pos.
404 Economic Planning: pos.
405 Corporatism: pos.
406 Protectionism: pos.
407 Protectionism: neg.
408 Economic Goals
409 Keynesian Demand Management: pos.
410 Economic Growth
411 Technology and Infrastructure: pos.
412 Controlled Economy: pos.
413 Nationalisation: pos.
414 Economic Orthodoxy: pos.
415 Marxist Analysis: pos.
416 Anti-Growth Economy: pos.

Domain 5: Welfare and Quality of Life
501 Environmental Protection: pos.
502 Culture: pos.
503 Equality: pos.
504 Welfare State Expansion
505 Welfare State Limitation
506 Education Expansion
507 Education Limitation

Domain 6: Fabric of Society
601 National Way of Life: pos.
602 National Way of Life: neg.
603 Traditional Morality: pos.
604 Traditional Morality: neg.
605 Law and Order: pos.
606 Civic Mindedness: pos.
607 Multiculturalism: pos.
608 Multiculturalism: neg.

Domain 7: Social Groups
701 Labour Groups: pos.
702 Labour Groups: neg.
703 Agriculture: pos.
704 Middle Class and Professional Groups: pos.
705 Minority Groups: pos.
706 Non-Economic Demographic Groups: pos.

000 No meaningful category applies

share of proxy documents is very low for the 2009 elections. Despite the close cooperations of parties from the same party family in the European parliament, parties from the same party family in different countries usually do publish and draft their manifestos indepedently.

Coding

A second major focus of critique is the Manifesto Project's coding procedure. Three elements of the coding process were critcally reviewed: the coding scheme, the coding unit and the coder reliability.

The coding scheme was criticized for several reasons: First, it does not cover issues that are of high interest in many countries today. For example it does not include codes on immigration, data privacy or the use of nuclear power. The coding scheme was developed at the end of the 70s and has only seen a few changes since then. There have been no major changes to the coding scheme as this would break the long time-series of equally coded material. However, many scholars use existing categories successfully as proxies to measure a party's emphasis on current issues, for example the code of multi-culturalism is used as a substitute to measure a party's stance on immigration (Alonso and Fonseca, 2012; Abou-Chadi, 2016). Second, the category scheme was criticized as an unsystematic mix of positional and valence issues (Zulianello, 2014). For some issues the coding scheme contains two categories covering two positions per issues, for example welfare state extension and welfare state retrenchment. However, for many issues, there is only one category, for example positive mentionings of environmental protection, but there is no opposite category of this. The original argument was that these issues are valence issues and no party would for example have a position against environmental protection. For some of the categories this claim proved to be wrong. Today, there are for example parties not believing in climate change and therefore taking a critical stance on environmental protection. A position that is not captured by the category scheme. Empirically, this problem is much less evident than expected. In 2009, the Euromanifesto project applied a coding scheme that has opposite categories for all issues - even the ones not covered by the normal manifesto coding scheme. The opposite categories not covered by the normal manifesto coding scheme are rare. On average they account for less than 5% of all statements in a manifesto.

The Manifesto Project was critiziced for using quasi-sentences as a coding unit instead of natural sentences. Däubler et al. (2012) claim that the coding of natural sentences produces almost identical results compared to the more fine-grained coding of quasi-sentences. The critics suggest that there is no advantage of using quasi-sentences over natural sentences. However, using natural sentences instead of using quasi-sentences is also not shown to produce more reliable estimates. Or in other words, using quasi-

sentences is likely not better than using natural sentences, but it is also not worse.

A third line of debate addresses the reliability of the coding. Mikhaylov, Laver, and Benoit (2012) criticized that the Manifesto Project's coding is in many cases unreliable. Moreover, the fact that the coding is executed by only on single coder introduces a lot of error in the dataset. Lacewell and Werner (2013) responded that the procedure that is in place to train the coders was not correctly accounted for by Mikhaylov, Laver, and Benoit (2012) and the reliability of the production data is higher than suggested by them. Moreover, Volkens et al. (2013, p. v) argue that the coding error from different categories cancels each other out when aaggregating several categories to a common scores. Aggregation is expected to reduce the error in the data because some of the codings are difficult to distinguish. If these categories are summed together, the misclassifications between these two categories that were considered as error before are not a problem anymore (Volkens et al., 2013, p. v).

Scaling Left-Right Positions and Issue Emphasis

The measurement of issue emphasis with the Manifesto Project Dataset is relatively straightfoward: the share of a category (or the sum of the shares of several categories) as an indicator for a party's emphasis of an issue. Aggregating several categories to a policy dimension potentially reduces the coding error due to random and systematical misclassification between two similar coding categories. I will similarly operationalize the parties' issue emphasis strategies. The exact operationalization is described in the empirical chapters.

Despite the complexity of the coding scheme, the most popular application of the Manifesto Project Dataset is the scaling of parties' positions on a single left-right axis. Theories of party competition commonly assume such uni-dimensional space of political competition because parties' positions on most issues correlate so that a single dimension can describe political competition fairly well (Downs, 1957). The general idea on how to come from the coding of 56 different policy goals to one measure of left-right is that parties differently emphasize issues based on their ideological positions. Left-wing parties will put more emphasis on left issues than on right issues. Accordingly, right-wing parties emphasize right issues more than left issues. The approaches mostly differ about how to define the different categories as left and right, how to weight them and how to aggregate them to one score. The most common approach is the *ri*ght-*le*ft measure developed by Laver and Budge (1992). The *rile* measure has provoked a lot of criticism followed by many suggestions on how to better calculate left-right positions using manifesto data. However, it is heavily used by many scholars, probably also because it is the only ready-made left-right indicator included in

the dataset. The rile is the difference between the share of statements on left categories and the share of right categories. Whether a category is left, right or neutral was derived theoretically and confirmed by a factor analysis conducted by Laver and Budge (1992) in the 1990s based on a sample of western democracies. They identified thirteen categories as left and thirteen as right. The left-right position (p) then is simply the difference between the share of right statements (R) and the share of left statements (L).

$$p = R - L \tag{3.1}$$

The rile was criticized for having a centrist bias because the share of neutral statements can heavily influence the left-right position of a party. The more statements that are not related to left and right are included in the document, the more a party's position is shifted to the political center. To account for this Kim and Fording (1998) propose to divide the difference of left and right by the sum of left and right statements which produces estimates that are independent of the number of neutral statements (the same method was also suggested by Laver and Garry, 2000).

$$p = \frac{R - L}{R + L} \tag{3.2}$$

Yet another scaling approach was suggested by Lowe et al. (2011). They propose to take the logratio to account for the presumably non-linear gain in information. They argue that the logit better reflects the diminishing gains of information. Whether a party emphasizes a topic not at all or only a little bit is a bigger substantive difference then whether a party emphasizes an issue much or very much. They claim that their scores correlate higher with expert surveys and therefore are of higher validity.

$$p = log\frac{R}{L} \tag{3.3}$$

A disadvantage of this procedure is that the endpoints of the scale are not theoretically defined. This may cause problems when mapping the estimates to scores derived from other scales that are theoretically bounded (such as party placements by voters via survey questions). Although all three discussed scaling procedures make substantively different assumptions, they empirically correlate at extremely high levels and produce for many research questions identical results.

Instead of defining which categories are left and right a priori, Gabel and Huber (2000) suggest to identify left and right categories inductively.[3] They conduct a factor analysis on all categories and propose to interpret the first factor as the left-right dimension of party competition. The factor

[3] Klingemann (1995) made similar suggestion, however excluding the foreign policy categories.

scores estimated for each manifesto are then the parties' left-right positions. This so-called *vanilla* approach is purely inductive and detects the dominant dimension of party competition. The factor analysis can be conducted for specific countries or time periods to account for differences in the dominant dimension of party competition over time or between countries.

Another approach to account for differences in left-right across countries and over time was made by Franzmann and Kaiser (2006). They proposed a multi-step procedure with a few smaller adjustements and one major difference: they decide whether categories are classified as left, right or consensual based on a dummy regression using the parties as independent variables. This produces a country and time specific classification of left, right and neutral issues and thereby also accounts for differences in the content of the left-right dimension across countries and over time.

Van der van der Brug (2001) and Jahn (2011) took this idea one step further and argue that the different categories can be categorized more fine-grained than into left, neutral and right categories. Both suggest to use multi-dimensional scaling techniques to scale the categories on an interval scale instead of sorting them into only three categories (left, right, neutral).

The authors of these methods suggest that their method is "the best" to measure parties left-right positions. In contrast, I think that the question of which method is best depends on the precise research question and the underlying assumption about what left and right constitute, the compatibility with other data and the country and time coverage. Therefore, I will address the exact operationalization and decision for a measure in the methods sections of the empirical chapters.

3.6 Comparing Data from Manifestos and Media Coverage

The concept of the manifesto–media link implies that we can compare data based on electoral programs with data derived from media coverage. However, such a comparison faces many challenges. In the following I will illustrate how these challenges can be tackled. Most of the challenges discussed here apply to all different dataset combinations used in the empirical chapters.

Sampling of parties and media outlets

Using Manifesto Project Data to measure parties' preferences and data based on media content during the electoral campaign implies an asymmetric coverage in terms of parties and media outlets. Whereas the data coverage of parties' electoral programs is close to a full coverage, the data coverage of media outlets and their reporting is necessarily limited and is the result

of a stricter sampling procedure. Although the Manifesto Project Dataset (and the Euromanifesto Dataset) do not cover all parties that compete at elections, they have a clear criteria covering all the relevant parties (namely the parties represented in parliament) and thereby providing a very good picture of the party system. In contrast, media systems are much more fragmented than party systems. On the one hand, there are different types of media outlets such as radio stations, tv channels, newspapers and online media and different types of formats within their coverage such as radio news, talkshows, opinion article, reports, and a vast amount of different online formats. On the other hand, even within these types, the number of competitors is often higher and the concentration is smaller than in party systems. Even large and well-funded projects of media content analysis do not have the resources to conduct a comprehensive analysis covering all content produced by all media outlets. A sampling of media outlets and content is therefore necessary. The guiding principle of the sampling is the same as the one applied to the sampling of electoral programs: the relevance. Relevance is often measured in terms of circulation or outreach. As the relevance of different format is hard to compare, media content studies often sample the most relevant outlet among their competitors, for example the most read tabloid newspapers in a country, or the most watched tv news programs within a country. The exact data and sampling applied in the empirical chapters is described later. However, the sampling always follows the relevance criterion discussed here.

Different coding schemes

The empirical analysis requires data on media coverage and electoral programs for a common set of issues. Most projects that generated large scale content analytical datasets on electoral programs or media coverage were started independent of each other and apply different issue coding schemes. For example the issue coding of the Manifesto Project contains 56 main categories which are distributed over seven domains. In contrast, the team from the European Election study used a more fine-grained coding scheme with a list of more than 150 different issues (Schuck et al., 2010). The general solution to come to comparable data is to map both issue coding schemes to a common scheme. If for example one scheme contains specific codes for different parts of the welfare state such as health system and pensions and the other scheme only contains one category for the welfare state, all the specific codes relating to the welfare state are merged and mapped on the welfare state code of the second coding scheme. The resulting scheme is - so to say - the largest common denominator of both schemes covering all issues with maximally the degree of detail of the coding scheme that covers the issue less extensive.

However, it is not always possible to find and equivalent category in two

different coding schemes, even after merging several categories in a scheme. Media content analytical data based on news stories for example often contains a code covering stories dealing with the wheather (for example covering extraorindary heat or cold periods and their consequences - or wheather reports). Electoral programs hardly ever cover such a topic. Consequentially, the analysis excludes issues from the analysis where the category schemes cannot be mapped.

Different frequency of publication

Comparing electoral programs with media content comes along with the challenge to compare two very different types of documents. An electoral program is a document issued by a political party before the election usually enacted by a party convention that illustrates a party's policy goals and positions. Electoral programs shape the electoral campaign in providing guidelines for the most important issues and positions used in leaflets, brochures, posters and press releases (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2011; Norris et al., 1999). The advantage to analyze electoral programs is that they are single documents that cover a broad range of issues and indicate priorities of parties becaues a party has to decide which issues to emphasize in their program. Where electoral programs are single documents issued once during the electoral campaign, media content is of a different nature. Media content is almost constantly published during the electoral campaign. Most newspapers are published on six days per week. TV news can be watched all day. Similar things can be said for radio and online news that are published constantly. The frequency of publication varies between different types of media, but all have a higher frequency of publication than electoral programs. So, the question is then how to compare the content of a single document with media coverage that is regularly or constantly published?

The solution here is to aggregate the media content over a longer period of time to a single value, for example the share of all articles on a specific issue published by a newspaper or the average issue position of a party during the electoral campaign. This necessarily also implies a loss of information and a reduction of complexity. First, when aggregating the information from different articles or news stories during the electoral campaign to one score for the whole campaign, we ignore differences that might occur during the electoral campaign. Second, by summing or averaging scores over different types of articles within the coverage of a media outlet, we ignore differences between for example opinion articles and reports. Both aspects could be studied with the data used here, however as the goal here is a cross-national research design and thereby a large scope of the study, a reduction of the complexity and the depth of the study is necessary to avoid an overcomplex design.

Empirical Chapters

Chapter 4

Party Agendas and Media Agendas

4.1 When Do Parties and Media Discuss the Same Issues?

Similar agendas in electoral programs and media coverage during the electoral campaign are crucial for the functioning of political representation.[1] Despite parties' efforts to get out their messages directly to voters via campaign material, info desks and social media, the mass media remain the most important source of information for voters on elections, parties and issues. If mass media discussed different issues than the parties during the electoral campaign, voters would have difficulties to get information on the parties' positions, priorities and pledges. If for example a party's discourse focused on social issues while media coverage solely covered foreign politics, voters could hardly get an idea of what the focal party stands for on the issues considered as important by the party. Congruent agendas between a party and the coverage of a media outlet are not a guarantee that voters get information on parties' issue positions because media coverage – despite focusing on the same issues – could still avoid talking about a party's position. But still, congruent agendas between programs and media coverage guarantees that voters have access to information about issues that are considered as salient by parties. So, similar agendas between parties and media coverage are not a sufficient condition that voters get information on parties' issue positions and priorities, but they are certainly a necessary condition for it.

What is desirable for the functioning of political representation is however highly contested among political parties. For political parties, the congruence between the agenda of a media outlet and a party's program is a

[1] An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the General Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research, 2015, in Montréal and at a MARPOR workshop at the WZB in January 2016.

good indicator of a party's success in shaping the media agenda. Political parties make huge efforts to influence the media agenda. In particular during electoral campaigns, agenda control is crucial for parties because citizens consider issues as more salient and problems as more urgent when they are discussed by the mass media (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). Parties can profit or suffer from the media agenda as voters evaluate parties differently in regard to different issues. A party profits from the media agenda if the media discuss issues where the party has an advantage, for example when voters consider the party as the most competent to handle this issue. A party suffers from the media agenda if the media discuss issues where the party has a disadvantage compared to its competitors, for example if only a minority of the electorate shares the party's issue position. Therefore, a party's electoral success is facilitated by a favorable media agenda. Consequentially, parties try to set issues on the media agenda from which they profit by emphasizing them in their own campaign material and parties try to distract from issues from which they would suffer by downplaying them in their campaign. As the media agenda is limited in scope, the „agenda-setting process is an on-going competition between issue proponents" (Dearing and Rogers, 1996, p. 1) in which parties try to manipulate the importance of issues on the media agenda. Not all parties are equally successful in shaping the media agenda.

As the relationship between parties and mass media is one of mutual dependence and constant adaptation (Strömbäck and Aelst, 2013), it is often difficult to identify the direction of this relationship: whether parties adapt to the media agenda or mass media respond to issues from parties' programs. Past research found that during electoral campaigns it is rather the parties that set the media agenda than vice versa (Walgrave and van Aelst, 2006). Therefore, I assume an agenda setting process where parties try to set the media agenda. Again, the goal of this chapter is not to study the direction of this link, but its strength and its determinants.

Existing research on the similarity between party and media agendas are mostly case studies based on a single country or even a single election that come to sometimes contrasting conclusions (Dalton et al., 1998; Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen, 2003; Ridout and Mellen, 2007; Brandenburg, 2005; Brandenburg, 2006; Hopmann et al., 2010a). The focus of this chapter lies in the generalization and contextualization of these determinants of agenda congruence by studying agenda congruence with a comparative research design. The empirical case under investigation are the European parliamentary elections 2009 that took place in 27 countries. Content analytical data frhom 119 parties' electoral programs is used to measure the parties' agendas, and data from the media component of the European Election Study assembling data from three different newspapers and two news broadcasts per country is used to study the media agenda. This data source is unique in its country coverage and therefore presents an insightful case because it covers

media outlets and parties from very different party and media systems. The results indicate that–on average–media and party share one third of their agendas. Given the conservative methodology with a very fine-grained issue scheme and the supposedly second-order nature of European elections, this is solid evidence that the first condition of the manifesto–media link is met. Moreover, there is little to no evidence of a structural bias in favor of the incumbent party or a partisan bias where media outlets promote the agendas of affiliated parties. There are differences between media outlets as well as party and media systems. Newspapers (compared to tv news) and media outlets with an audience that is politically more interested show a higher reflection of party agendas. In regard to country differences, more fragmented party systems produce higher congruence between party and media agendas and systems with a higher professionalization of journalism lead to a lower congruence between party and media agendas.

These findings have implications for our understanding of the role of the media and parties for the functioning in democracy. In the following, I will briefly illustrate the state of the current research on agenda congruence between parties and media. Then I will derive hypotheses from the existing literature and case studies. After describing the case, data and models applied, I will present the results and conclude the paper with a summary of the findings and possible directions of future research.

4.2 Party and Media Agendas

To answer the question whether journalists in media coverage and parties in electoral programs discuss the same issues, it is essential to review the concept of an agenda: "An *agenda* is a set of issues that are communicated in a hierarchy of importance at a point in time." (Dearing and Rogers, 1996) Issues on the agenda are not randomly sorted but structured by their attributed importance. In other words, an agenda is an actor's prioritization of certain issues over others. Agenda-setting describes the process by which the agenda of one actor influences the agenda of another actor (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). Communication research for example has well established that the media agenda influences the public's agenda: if media cover an issue more extensively, voters consider this issue as more salient (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). Though in most cases several actors at once try to influence the agenda of one or several other actors - making agenda-setting a competitive process. In regard to political competition this means that parties try to set the the voters' agenda because the question of which party wins an election also depends on the question of which issue is salient among voters (Riker, 1986). Voters evaluate parties differently dependent on which issue is at stake. Therefore, parties try to increase voters' perceived salience of issues that are somehow advantageous

to them. Such an advantage – often labeled issue-ownership - might result from different sources or actions in the past (Budge and Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996; Dolezal et al., 2014; Egan, 2013; Sellers, 1998). This can be a good issue handling reputation or a positive track record on an issue, for exampling by having enacted some major reforms in the last legislative term. Parties can also profit from their stance on an issue if their issue position is shared by their core electorate and a huge majority of the electorate. Similary, the mere associative link between issues and parties by voters can also be advantageous for parties (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Tresch, 2012).

The most important channel by which parties can increase voters' perceived salience of an issue – the public agenda - are the mass media. Although parties' campaign efforts adresses many voters directly, the mass media are still the most important source of information for many voters. Mass media prime voters during the electoral campaign by telling them which issues to weigh stronger when evaluating a party's performance, position and competence. Parties are said to be particular successful in shaping the media agenda during the electoral campaign. In comparison to routine times, parties are responsible for most of the media coverage of the electoral campaign for several reasons (for a good summary, see Walgrave and van Aelst, 2006): Parties put more effort in influencing the agenda than in routine times because more is at stake. Accordingly, media pay more attention to politics during the electoral campaign and devote more time and pages to political parties than in routine times. Coverage during the electoral campaign is more balanced because journalists do not want to appear as being partisan during an electoral campaign. During the electoral campaigns, some media outlets implement strict practices to ensure balanced coverage in regard to the visibility and representation of parties during electoral campaigns. Admittedly, a large share of election news coverage does not deal with policy issues at all. Many stories for example focus on the state of the race covering the electoral campaign like a horse-race by providing opinion polls (Banducci and Hanretty, 2014). Still, political actors that manage to set their issues on the media agenda have an electoral advantage over their competitors because they get their messages through to voters more effectively (Hayes, 2008a).

The question of whether and when the agenda of a party and a media outlet are congruent has been studied under different labels such as agenda bias (Brandenburg, 2005; Brandenburg, 2006), issue convergence (Sigelman and Buell, 2004), agenda convergence (Hayes, 2008a; Hayes, 2010), agenda building (Cobb and Elder, 1971) and party media agenda setting (Hopmann et al., 2010a).

The existing research on agenda congruence is highly influenced by studies from the US context – however producing very different results. Dalton et al. (1998) studied news coverage of the presidential elections in 1992 of 46 newspapers across the US. They identified whether a story is about the

Clinton campaign, the Bush campaign or initiated by the media itself. The reported agenda scores for each of the three types of reporting and across different types of articles all support the picture that the agendas across outlets, whether on Clinton or Bush, and including the public agenda are extremely similar. Moreover, they find no difference for newspapers with different endorsements. They even compare the issue agenda of the party platforms with the media agenda reporting a high correlation of .78 between the two. However, as Ridout and Mellen (2007) point out, the high degree of congruence found by Dalton and colleagues might be a consequence of the very small number of categories they used to code the stories. There is for example one category called "social programs" that subsumes a lot of stories. This would subsumes such different issues as health, pensions, jobs, etc. In contrast, in a longitudinal study of the content of the New York Times and the presidential nomination acceptance speeches as well as the candidates tv spots from 1952 through 2000, the media agenda was found to be almost completely detached from the candidates' agendas (Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen, 2003). In a study on five US senate races, Ridout and Mellen (2007) compared candidates' advertising material on the one hand and tv news broadcasting and the content of local newspapers on the other hand. They found that the degree of issue convergence between media outlets and candidates varies drastically between Senate races with some races indicating very low degrees of issue convergence. According to them, this indicates that the so called „pack journalism" that can be found in the national presidential campaign – the idea that most journalists from different outlets closely follow the campaign trail and therefore cover very similar issues – cannot be confirmed at the subpresidential level. Moreover, they found greater convergence between newspapers and candidates' agendas than between tv news broadcasts and candidates' agendas. Ridout and Mellen (2007) explain the varying degrees of congruence within their study as well as compared to the results of Dalton et al. with the different electoral context. They also conclude their study that „future work should be trying to explain differences in issue convergence [between parties and media] across campaigns" (Ridout and Mellen, 2007, p. 59).

A cross-country study by Semetko et al. (1991) analyzes party and media agendas at US presidential and British parliamentary elections. They find a higher correlation between party and media agendas in the UK then in the US. However, due to the small number of countries involved, it is not clear what causes the different degrees of congruence. There are a few studies that deal with agenda congruence in the European context. Brandenburg (2006) studied media content and parties' press releases at the 2005 UK general elections. He found generally high degrees of issue convergence between parties' press releases and media content during the electoral campaign. Surprisingly, a comparison of a newspaper's party endorsement with the degree of the reflection of a party's agenda revealed little systematic

evidence that newspapers promote an endorsed party's agenda. A similar study by Brandenburg (2005) on the Irish 2002 general election revealed significant correlations between party and media agendas, but also large variation across the cases. Hopmann et al. (2010a) studied parties' media agenda setting capacities during the electoral campain for the 2007 national elections in Denmark. They found that a party's capacity to influence the media agenda depends on its relevance and power. Parties with coalition potential are more influential than parties with blackmailing potential which are again more influential than irrelevant parties. Their study was in so far innovative as it replaced specific parties with characteristics of parties.

Lots of studies that deal with the reflection of a party's or candidate's agenda in media coverage in European countries are based on single elections. Explanations in existing studies are mostly related to specific parties and media outlets instead of characteristics of parties and media outlets or different political or media systems. Similar to the US context where there are large differences between the campaigns of Senat elections and presidential elections, there are huge differences between the national electoral contexts across Europe. First, party systems differ in Europe from strongly fragmented party systems and highly concentrated to (almost) two-party system. Second, media systems vary across Europe from liberal over democratic corporatist to polarized pluralist ones indicated by varying degrees of journalistic professionalism (Hallin and Mancini, 2004).

This chapter takes a comparative perspective seeking to replace idiosyncratic factors and specific parties with theoretically derived concepts and variables similar to Hopmann et al. (2010a). The aim is to identify determinants of agenda congruence between parties and media outlets across countries. A comparative perspective serves two aims: contextualization and generalization (Esser and Pfetsch, 2004; Wirth and Kolb, 2004). The latter means the testing of findings from prior research regarding the characteristics of parties and media organizations and their influence on the agenda congruence. Contextualization relates to the identification of country differences and the different effects of influential factors due to differences at the country level.

I speak here of agenda congruence instead of other concepts such as agenda bias or agenda-setting. Although the term agenda convergence is slightly more common in the existing literature (see eg. Hayes, 2008a; Hayes, 2010), it implies a process that is not of interest here, but also not possible to measure with electoral programs that can only provide data for a single point in time. Agenda congruence describes the degree of similarity between a specific party's agenda and the agenda of a specific media outlet (Ridout and Mellen, 2007).

4.3 Determinants of Agenda Congruence

A dyadic concept and measurement of agenda congruence has the advantage that it allows the test of hypotheses related to different levels of analysis. Party chararcteristics can explain why on average all media outlets reflect the agenda of parties with certain characteristics more closely than other parties' agendas. Characteristics of media outlets can explain why certain types of media outlets talk more about issues emphasized by parties. Party–media ties can explain why the level of agenda congruence is particularly between a specific media and a specific party. Finally, variables relating to the political or media system can account for differences in the degree of agenda congruence across different countries. Additionally, cross-level interactions can explain why certain party or media characteristics have different effects depending on the type of media or political system.

Although one often speaks of the media, clearly „[t]here is no such thing as the media" (Newton, 1996). Instead there are different types, forms and formats of mass media: television shows, daily press, radio news, websites and many more. Different types of media provide different content in different ways that is processed and consumed by different audiences.

Past research on agenda congruence comes to mixed conclusion in regard to differences between television broadcasts and newspapers. Brandenburg (2005) founds slightly higher levels of congruence between television broadcasts and parties' press releases compared to congruence of press releasese and press coverage in the Irish case. Ridout and Mellen (2007) report higher levels of congruence between candidates' agendas and newspapers than between television broadcasts and candidates' agendas for most of the senate races they studied. Similarly, Hayes (2010) also found much higher levels of congruence for newspapers than for television broadcasts for two presidential races in the US context.

There are arguments for both sides: On the one hand television news broadcasts could be more prone to the agenda-setting attempts of parties because it depends on the politicians' appearannces and sound bites. ewspaper journalists can more easily cover issues that are not emphasized by politicians. On the other hand, the distribution of attention might be more similar between newspapers and electoral programs than between television news broadcasts and electoral programs. Television news broadcasts need to focus on a few major stories every day while newspapers can cover a broader range of stories.

As the expectations on the differences between newspapers and television are mixed, I formulate two competing hypotheses.

Newspaper Hypothesis: *Agenda congruence is higher for newspapers than for TV news broadcasts.*

Television Hypothesis: *Agenda congruence is higher for TV news broadcasts than for newspapers.*

The content of media coverage is also shaped by a media's audience. As media outlets are in a market situation they adopt their product to the needs and wishes of their buyers. I assume that citizens choose their newspaper and television channel based on several criteria such as the price (of a newspaper), its partisanship orientation, the amount of information, and its entertaining value. Some of these criteria are hard to the be fulfilled at the same time. While eg. some citizens prefer entertainment over information others have the opposite preference. More politically interested will choose newspapers and news broadcasts which provide them with more information on politics, parties and politicians. This relationshop is reinforced and maintained by journalists who know their audience and provide them with what their audience seeks. A media outlet with politically more intested audience will provide its audience with more information about parties and their issues than about issues unrelated to parties.

Audience Interest Hypothesis: *The more politically interested the audience of a media outlet, the larger the party-media agenda congruence.*

The most important party-related factor in terms of media coverage is a party's role in a political system. Government parties are said to profit in terms of media coverage from an incumbency bonus. All else being equal, government parties are more often mentioned in media coverage than opposition parties (for an overview of studies, see Hopmann, Van Aelst, and Legnante, 2012). There are several reasons for this "structural bias" (Hofstetter, 1976) in favor of government parties. First, government actors fulfill several criteria of newsworthiness. News factors which make any news event more newsworthy are for example the presence of an elite, prominent or powerful actor. Government parties fulfill many of these news value criteria at the same time as they are promient, powerful, responsible and an elite actor. Past research on the incumbency bonus was mostly about a party's visibility in media coverage. However, a similar argument can be made about a party's capacities to set the media agenda. If government parties are more visible in media coverage, it is likely that they are more capable of shaping the media agenda than opposition parties which would lead to higher congruence between government and the media agendas than opposition parties' agendas and the media agenda.

Incumbency Bonus Hypothesis: *Agenda congruence is higher for incumbent parties than for opposition parties.*

A similar argument can be made about a party's size independent of its government status. Larger parties are more powerful and more relevant in the political system. They have more parliamentarians and are more likely

to be veto players for example in a second chamber. Moreover, large parties emphasize issues considered as salient by all voters whereas small parties rather tend to emphasize their core issues (Wagner and Meyer, 2014). Similarly, Hopmann et al. (2011) analyzed the media coverage of the electoral campaign at the Danish national elections in 2007. They find that not all parties are equally successful in getting their messages in the media. More relevant parties are more likely to get their messages in the media than small irrelevant parties.

Party Power Hypothesis: *The larger a party, the larger the party-media agenda congruence.*

While the latter two factors are sources of a structural bias for all types of media, the last determinant of agenda congruence addressed here is partisan bias (Hofstetter, 1976). In general, media coverage can be termed partisan if it constantly favors a specific party. Such partisan bias can take different forms. A media outlet may favor a party by giving more coverage to a party's politicians, by being less critically with a party's track record, by adopting the framing of a party's electoral campaign, by critically covering the opponents of the party, and many more ways. Agenda congruence can also be considered a form of partisan bias as it is a media's mean to promote the agenda of an affiliated party. This is also the reason why (Brandenburg, 2005) speaks of agenda bias instead of agenda congruence. An example for agenda bias was found in the US context: press outlets endorsing democratic candidates put more emphasis on unemployment if unemployment is high and a republican president is in office compared to when a democratic president is in office (Larcinese, Puglisi, and Snyder Jr., 2011). Accordingly, I expect that partisan outlets cover issues more prominently if they are emphasized by their supported party to promote the agenda of the preferred party.

Media Partisanship Hypothesis: *The more partisan a media outlet, the higher the agenda congruence between the party and the media outlet.*

4.4 Design, Data & Methodology

Case selection

I test these hypotheses using quantitative data from the European parliamentary elections 2009. These elections took place in all 27 EU member countries between 4 and 7 June. The fact that the same type of election took place at the same point in time in a relatively large number of countries is an optimal case for a comparative research design that aims at generalization and contextualization. The countries of the European Union are marked by a large variety of party and media systems. Party systems range

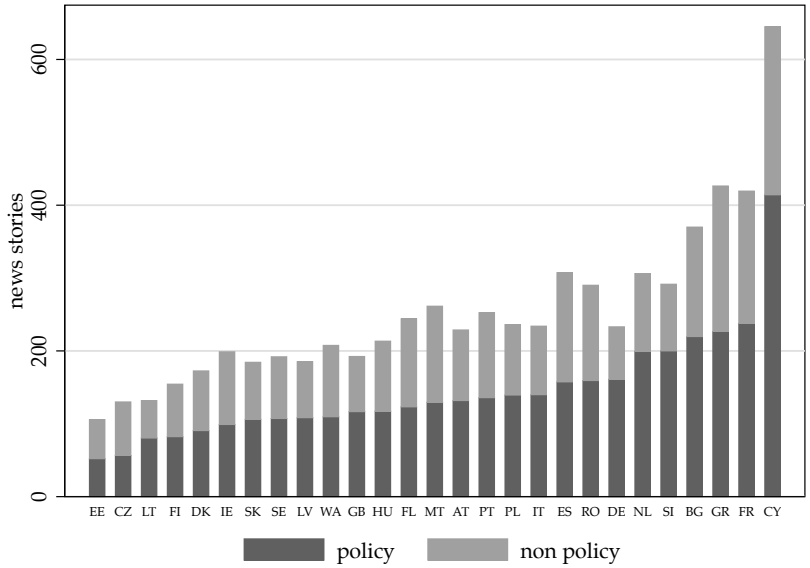
from a pur two-party system (in Malta) to highly fragmented party systems (in Latvia or the Netherlands). Similarly, media systems range from liberal commercialized media systems in the UK over democratic corporatist media system in Central and Northern Europe to polarized pluralist systems in Southern and Eastern Europe (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Analyzing EP elections across countries instead of analyzing several elections within one country has the advantage that the time is held constant across all observations. This prohibits variation in the data due to changes in the role of mass media and electoral programs. Although European elections are often considered to be second-order elections because their importance among voters and parties is lower in comparison to general national elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980), national actors clearly dominate the media coverage during the electoral campaign (de Vreese et al., 2006).

Data

The two major data sources in this chapter are: content analytical data of parties' electoral programs from the Euromanifesto project (Braun, Mikhaylov, and Schmitt, 2010) to measure parties' agendas and data from the European Election Study media component on media campaign coverage (Schuck et al., 2010) of the most important outlets to measure the media agenda. The European Election Study Media Dataset (Schuck et al., 2010) contains information on media coverage during the electoral campaign in all European member states in 2009. In each country, media coverage from at least two tv channels and three newspapers was collected and coded for the three weeks before the election. The tv coverage comprises usually the main evening news broadcasts. The newspapers sampled are two broadsheet (mostly one left-leaning and one right-leaning newspaper) and a tabloid newspaper to represent the diversity of news coverage. TV news stories were coded entirely whereas for newspapers, only stories on the frontpage and a randomly selected other page as well as all other EU-related stories were coded. The coding unit is the news story – news items for tv news and articles for newspapers. Coders were asked to name the primary, secondary and tertiary topics mentioned in every news story according to a category scheme with around 150 distinct issues. In contrast to many other studies on the media coverage of the European parliamentary elections, this chapter looks at the salience of policy issues, disregarding the salience of non-policy issues and "procedural" campaign coverage such as coverage on polls, politicians' personality, etc. Figure 4.4 indicates the average number of news stories per country as well as the share of policy and non-policy stories. Slightly more than half the stories contain information on policy issues. All policy issue mentionings for each outlet are aggregated over the whole campain to get shares of issue attention for each outlet on each issue.

Past research on agenda congruence, agenda bias or agenda setting has

Figure 4.1: Average number of news stories across media outlets



mostly made use of a party's press releases or paid media such as tv advertisements to measure a party's agenda (Ridout and Mellen, 2007; Brandenburg, 2005; Brandenburg, 2006). Both types of material suffer from the problem that they might be strongly influenced by real-world events or by a party's competitors behaviour. In particular press releases are the product of a party's interaction with its competitors and therefore do not reflect a party's true agenda in an unfiltered way. This chapter circumvents this problem by using parties' electoral programs to measure a party's agenda. Usually, these documents are enacted at a party convention or at least agreed upon by the party leadership. Often they are the result of a long internal discussion process and are the documents that best reflect the party's position as a unitary actor. Data based on electoral program is highly comparable across countries and well reflects a party's preferences indicated by the many research based on the Manifesto Project Data (Budge et al., 2001; Klingemann et al., 2006; Volkens et al., 2016). The Euromanifesto Data (Braun et al. 2010) is based on a content analysis of parties' electoral programs issued for the European parliamentary elections. It uses a very similar methodology as the Manifesto Project who conducts content analyses based on parties' electoral programs at national elections. The Euromanifesto Data of 2009 contains information from 196 electoral programs. Parties are sampled that have been represented at least once in the European parliament. This comprises in most countries all relevant parties of the national level. The programs are split by the coders into so called quasi-sentences and then

coded with a hierarchical coding scheme with over 100 categories. The coding schemes of the Euromanifesto Project and the one used by the European Election media study are different, however the overlap of commonly used issues is high. Codes from both schemes can be aggregated so that they fit a common scheme. With over 60 unique issues (see table A.1 on page 152 in the appendix for the matching and category scheme), this scheme is relatively fine-grained and thereby creates a tough test for agenda congruence as it does not lump together different issues under the same umbrella label. For example in terms of social groups, it differentiates between policy towards old persons, young persons, women, homosexuals, labour groups, handicapped, ethnic minorities, underprivileged minority groups, linguistic groups and non-economic demographic groups. Similarly it differentiates between different parts of the welfare state such as education, child care, health, pensions, culture and housing. Figure 4.2 indicates the ten most salient issues across all manifestos and media outlets.

I create a dataset based on every party-media combination within each country. This leads (after the exclusion of a small number of cases due to missing information on some variables) to 691 party-media dyads (see table A.2 on page 165 in the appendix for an overview of parties and media outlets covered by the merged dataset).

Variables and Model

To operationalize agenda congruence I use the Duncan segregation index (Duncan and Duncan, 1955). This measure was already used in various studies to measure issue convergence or congruence (Eilders, 2000; Sigelman and Buell, 2004). Congruence between two agendas can be calculated for every pair of media outlet and party within one country. The formula reads the following:

$$congruence = 100 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} |media_i - party_i|}{2} \tag{4.1}$$

where $media_i$ is the issue emphasis of a media outlet on issue i and $party_i$ a party's issue emphasis in the electoral program. In words, agenda congruence describes the summed differences in issue emphasis between a media outlet and a party over all issues divided by two and substracted from 100. The higher the score, the more similar the two agendas. A score of 100 indicates that a party and a media outlet share the exact same agenda and a score of zero indicates that the media outlet and the party talk about completely different issues.[2]

[2] The Jenssen-Shannon distance would be another good measure to compare two issue distributions as it was designed to compare two multinomial distributions. The Jenssen-Shannon distance correlates strongly with the congruence measure described above (r=.97). I chose the congruence measure over the Jenssen-Shannon distance be-

Figure 4.2: Ten most salient issues in media coverage and manifestos

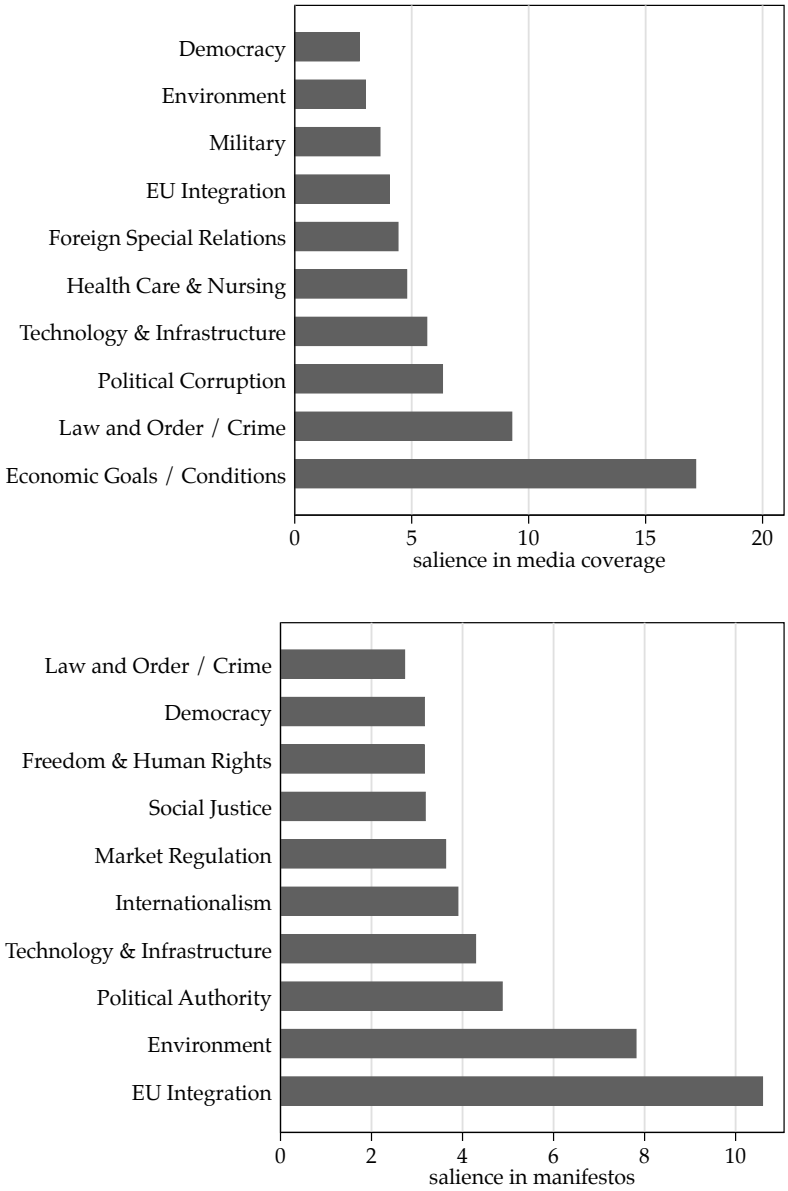
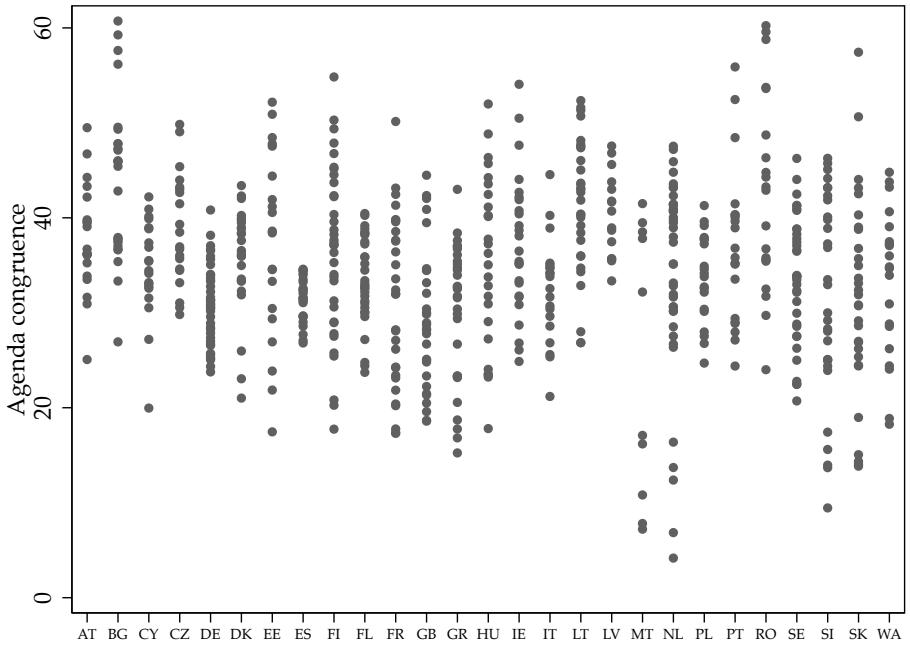


Figure 4.3: Agenda congruence



Some of the existing studies (eg. Dalton et al., 1998; Brandenburg, 2005) have used correlations between the issue of two agendas for a measure of congruence. However, such correlations are not a very good measure as they tend to overstate the congruence between two agendas and the results tend to be highly dependent on the category scheme and the number of issues. Adding a further issue category to a coding scheme would increase the congruence even if that category were empty or very little populated. The congruence measure used here does not suffer from this problem as empty or small categories have no or little effect on the final score. Figure 4.3 shows agenda congruences scores for all party-media combinations sorted by countries. It is evident from the graph that agenda congruence varies within and across countries. With a mean of 34 and a range from 4 to 61, the level of congruence is slightly below existing studies: Ridout and Mellen (2007) reported scores between 24 and 60; Hayes (2010) comes to higher degrees of congruence – up to 84. The lower degrees of congruence might be due to the fact that Hayes measured congruence on a weekly basis including candidates weekly emphasis of certain issues while I calculate agendas for the whole campaign.

The independent variables can be differentiated into party variables, media outlet variables, a variable relating to party-media dyads and system

cause the interpretation is more intuitive.

variables. Information on the incumbency status and a party's size is taken from the Contextual Dataset from the European Election Study. A party's size is operationalized by its vote share in the last national elections.[3] A dummy variables indicates whether a media outlet is a television broadcast or a newspaper. To measure the political interest of the audience of media outlet I rely on the voter survey data of the European Election Study. This survey asked respondents to indicate their political interest on a scale from 1 to 4 where 4 indicates high interest. An outlet's audience interest is then the mean political interest over the regular consumers of an outlet compared to the non-consumer of the outlet. For german media outlets this variable ranges from -0.3 for the Bild-Zeitung (the largest yellow press in the country) to 0.3 for the Süddeutsche Zeitung (a quality newspaper).

The partisanship of a media outlet is operationalized by the partisanship of an outlet's audience. I make us of the voter survey component of the European Election study. This component contains data from post-election surveys conducted in all EU countries. I make use of data from two different sets of questions. The first set asked respondents to indicate on a scale from -5 to +5 how likely it is that they would vote for a specific party in the election. This question was asked for all relevant parties. The second set of questions asked respondents on how many days per week they read the newspapers and watch the tv news broadcasts analyzed by the media component of the the European Election study illustrated above. The measure of audience-partisanship is inspired by van Kempen (2007) measure of media-party parallelism combining information on voters probability to vote with their media exposure. Audience-partisanship is the average difference in the probabilities to vote for a certain party between the regular audience of a media outlet and all other repondents. Regular exposure is here defined as at least once a week. The measure varies over media-party dyads because it indicates whether the readers of a newspaper are more or less in favor of a specific party.[4] To control for differences between different political and media systems I include a measure of party system fragmentation and journalistic independence. Party system fragmentation is one of the most important characteristics of a political system. Two-party systems and multi-party systems differ drastically in many ways and change how party competition works. Party system framgentation is operationalized as the effective number of parties based on the seat shares in the national parliament (Laakso and Taagepera, 1979). Similarly, the degree of journalistic

[3] Taking the logarithm of the vote share instead of the vote share or adding a quadratic term to the model does not provide any support for a non-linear relationship between party size and agenda congruence.

[4] When using an expert evaluation of partisanship based on the European Media Systems Survey, the results are very similar to the ones reported (Popescu, Gosselin, and Santana Pereira, 2010). I refrain from including both measures of partisanship as they are correlated.

independence is one of the most important dimension that shapes the functioning of a media system. Data from an expert survey on european media systems and media outlets (Popescu, Gosselin, and Santana Pereira, 2010) provides a measure of journalistic independence. The variable used from the expert survey dataset is a composite measure (jindep variable) based on a question on the public service orientation of journalists as well as the influence of businesses, interest groups and politicians on the work of journalists. Table 4.1 provides summary statistics for all variables.

Table 4.1: Summary statistics

Variable	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min.**	**Max.**
agenda congruence	34.63	8.70	4.17	60.72
incumbent	0.42	0.49	0	1
television broadcast	0.41	0.49	0	1
party vote share	16.04	11.04	0.81	56.36
audience interest	0.24	0.23	-0.32	0.78
aud. partisanship	0.14	0.94	-3.77	4.12
eff. num. parties	3.96	1.17	2	6
journal. indep	5.05	1.19	3.04	7.09
number of quasi-sentences	501.94	724.44	12	7003
number of news stories	251.96	148.26	7	892
N		691		

A stacked dataset that consists of all possible combinations of parties and media outlets within one country permit an analysis with different levels of analysis within the same model. For example the Swedish part of the dataset contains 30 observations because there is information from five different media outlets and six different political parties (which leads to 30 distinct party-media dyads). I use a linear regression to model the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables. Applying linear regression to variables on a bounded scale can be problematic as predictions can be out of this theoretical range. In our case, this is not a problem as the model does not make any predictions below zero or above 100. Robust multi-way cluster corrected standard errors account for the clustering of the data by outlet and parties (Cameron, Gelbach, and Miller, 2011).[5] Additionally, the length of the electoral programs (in quasi-sentences) and the number of stories covered by the media dataset are entered as control variables to account for potential bias due to the amount of data.

[5] Another way to account for the clustering is a model with crossed-random intercepts for parties and outlets. Such a model produces very similar results. Though, the model with the multi-way clustered standard errors is more conservative as the standard errors are slightly larger and the interpretation of the model is easier.

4.5 Empirical Analysis

Results

Table 4.2: Predicting agenda congruence between electoral programs and media coverage

	(1) general	(2) press	(3) tv
incumbent	2.120^{+}	2.201^{+}	2.004
	(1.207)	(1.238)	(1.335)
tv	-2.667***		
	(0.767)		
party vote share	0.0479	0.0567	0.0348
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.058)
audience interest	8.843***	8.067***	10.27***
	(1.602)	(2.234)	(2.841)
audience partisanship	0.159	0.188	0.0574
	(0.291)	(0.291)	(0.923)
effective number of parties	2.017***	1.904**	2.082**
	(0.599)	(0.640)	(0.721)
journalistic independence	-1.049^{+}	-0.673	-1.591**
	(0.544)	(0.644)	(0.535)
number of quasi-sentences	0.00165**	0.00164*	0.00175**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
number of news stories	-0.000444	-0.0000651	-0.00105
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.007)
Constant	28.52***	27.02***	28.46***
	(3.524)	(3.991)	(3.973)
N	691	405	286
R2	0.200	0.135	0.215

+ p <.1; * p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001. 2-way cluster robust SEs in parentheses.

Table 4.2 shows the results of the regression analysis. The "General Model" includes all independent and control variables. With an r2 of 0.2, the model can explain a significant amount of the variation in agenda congruence, however large amounts of variation also remain unexplained.

The first rather surprising result is that the party characteristics have very weak and hardly significant effect on agenda congruence. The effects for incumbency and party size are in the expected direction. However, the effect of party size is not significant. The effect size of the incumbency effect is around 2 suggesting that agenda congruence is on average 2 units higher than for opposition parties. However, the effect is only significant at the 10% level suggesting only a modest support for the incumbency hypothesis.

This is in line with the results reported by Hayes (2010) who also finds inconsistent support for an incumbency bonus.

In contrast, the effects for media outlet characteristics are all significant. Agenda congruence in television broadcasts is on average lower than in newspapers. Agenda congruence for television news broadcasts is on average 2.6 units smaller. That equals 30% of one standard deviation in agenda congruence (the standard deviation of agenda congruence is 8.7). Moreover, agenda congruence is higher for outlets that have a more politically interested audience. The average political interest of the audience of a media outlet has a positive effect on agenda congruence. The coefficient of 9.007 can best be interpreted as following: A change of one standard deviation on the political interest variable (0.24) causes an increase of 2.16 points on the agenda congruence scale (about 24% of one standard deviation in agenda congruence).

The general model does not provide any support for the partisanship hypothesis. The coefficient for audience partisanship is not significant. Partisan media do not promote the agenda of parties supported by their audience. This is in line with the findings by (Brandenburg, 2006) who also found weak associations between an outlet's endorsement of a party and the congruence between the media's agenda and the endorsed party's agenda.

In regard to the control variables, the party system fragmentation has a significant positive effect on agenda congruence. One "effective" party more in the system increases agenda congruence by 1.8 points. Party and media agendas are more congruent in fragmented party systems than in concentrated party system. It seems that mass media balance the more cognitively demanding aspects of a multi-party system by following the parties' agendas more closely. The degree of journalistic independence has a weakly significant negative effect suggesting that more independent journalists are less likely to cover party agendas.

Column 2 and 3 in Table 4.2 report coefficients for regressions based on press outlet and televisiion news separately. The findings corroborate most of the results from the general model. Audience interest has a positive effect, while party characteristics have only weakly significant or no effects at all.

Contextualization of effects

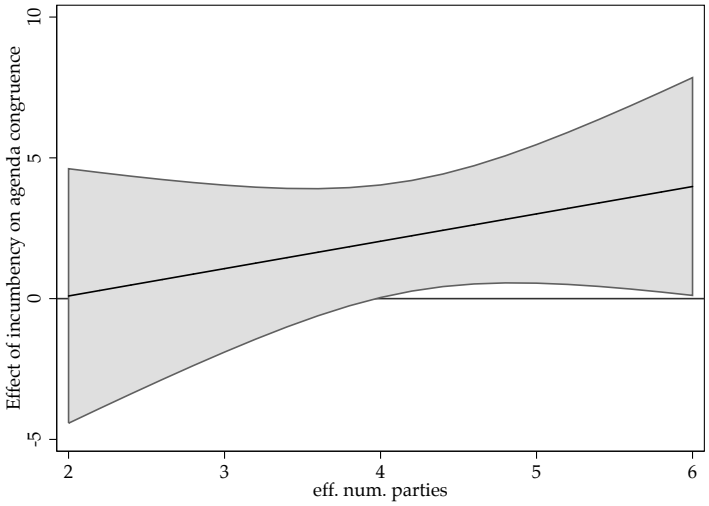
Does the media and party system influence the effects of media and party characteristics on agenda congruence? Table 4.3 reports models that include cross level interaction effects to test whether structural bias and partisan bias differ across political and media systems.

Table 4.3: Predicting agenda congruence between electoral programs and media coverage (with cross-level interactions)

	(1) media system	(2) party system
incumbent	2.192^{+}	-1.849
	(1.202)	(4.873)
television broadcast	-2.681***	-2.674***
	(0.763)	(0.770)
party vote share	0.0462	0.0566
	(0.055)	(0.051)
audience interest	8.859***	8.773***
	(1.603)	(1.606)
number of quasi-sentences	0.00164**	0.00164**
	(0.001)	(0.001)
number of news stories	-0.000446	-0.000460
	(0.003)	(0.003)
eff. num. parties	2.011***	1.679*
	(0.598)	(0.700)
journal. indep	-0.995^{+}	-1.028^{+}
	(0.541)	(0.541)
aud. partisanship	2.480*	0.156
	(1.167)	(0.283)
journal. indep $\times$ aud. partisanship	-0.492*	
	(0.235)	
incumbent $\times$ eff. num. parties		0.972
		(1.125)
Constant	28.28***	29.61***
	(3.508)	(3.642)
N	691	691
r2	0.204	0.203

+ p <.1; * p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001. 2-way cluster robust SEs in parentheses.

Figure 4.4: Marginal effect of incumbency on agenda congruence for varying levels of party system fragmentation (90% confidence intervals)

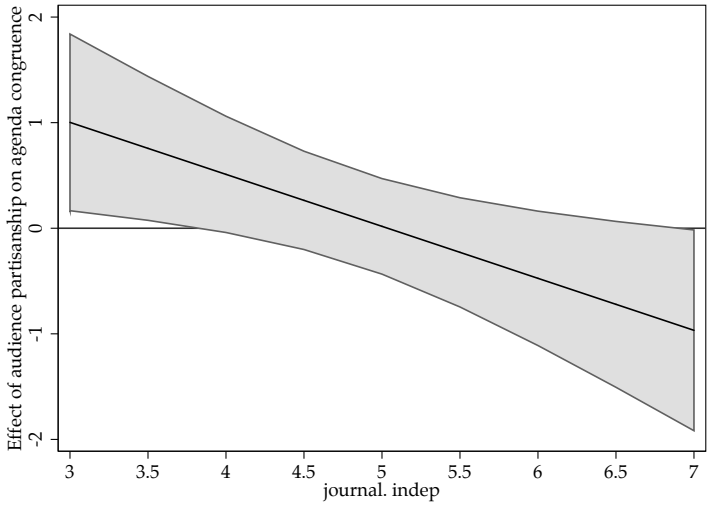


The effect of party system fragmentation on the incumbency bonus

Past studies found that the incumbency bonus in media coverage in terms of party visibility differs between countries and over time. For example the incumbency effect is weaker during the electoral campaign than in routine times. While in routine times media function as a watchdog monitoring the government, before elections media put more priority to a balanced reporting between the different parties (Green-Pedersen, Mortensen, and Thesen, 2015). Moreover, as the incumbency bonus can also be understood as structural bias, it "cannot be perceived as being independent of the different media and political systems" (Strömbäck and Shehata, 2007). The incumbency bonus was found to differ depending on the distribution of power (van Dalen, 2011). In regard to agenda congruence and the incumbency bonus, I expect that the effect of incumbency on agenda congruence varies between different party systems. While in two party system balanced issue coverage will mean balanced between the challenger an the incumbent, such an equal treatment of all opposition parties and the incumbent parties seems unlikely in a multi-party system. There, incumbent parties stick more out of the mass of opposition parties as the ones being in power and responsible.

Model 1 in table 4.3 reports results for the same model including an interaction effect between the incumbency variable and the party system fragmentation variable. Figure 4.4 visualizes the relationship. On the y axis is the effect of incumbency on agenda congruence and on the x axis the different levels of party system fragmentation. One can see that incumbency

Figure 4.5: Marginal effect of partisanship on agenda congruence conditional for varying levels of journalistic independence (90% confidence intervals)



bonus is only present at very high levels of party system fragmentation. This difference at high levels of party system fragmentation is only significant at the 90% confidence interval. At extremly high levels of party system fragmentation the predicted difference between goverment and opposition parties is about 4 units on the agenda congruence scale. One can conclude that there is only modest support for the incumbency bonus as incumbency only leads to higher levels of agenda congruence at high levels of party system fragmentation.

The effect of journalistic independence on partisan bias

Whereas media partisanship is a characteristic related to dyadic relationships between parties and media, the way how journalists and mass media work differs also drastically between media systems (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). In their popular typology of media systems, Hallin and Mancini consider the degree of journalistic professionalism one of four important dimensions that structures how mass media function within a country. I argue that journalistic professionalism increases the independence of journalist's from external pressures of politicians, parties and other interest groups. Mass media in countries with a higher degree of journalistic professionalism are expected to be less prone for partisan bias. So, the effect of partisanship on agenda congruence is expected to be conditional on low levels of journalistic independence.

As the interaction is between two continuous variables, the coefficient or

the significance of the interaction term alone in model 2 in table 4.3 is not very meaningful to interpret. Figure 4.5 visualizes the relationship: On the y axis is the strength and direction of the effect of partisanship on agenda congruence. Recall that this effect is not significant in the main model without an interaction term. The graph indicates that the effect of the partisanship of a media outlet varies with the degree of journalistic independence. Only in countries with very low levels of journalistic independence can one observe a significant effect of partisanship on agenda congruence. In media systems with a medium or high journalistic dependence, partisanship of a media outlet has no effect on agenda congruence.

4.6 Discussion

When do parties and media outlets share a common agenda? In this chapter, I seeked to identify determinants of congruent agendas between electoral programs and election news coverage. Using parties' electoral programs issued for the EP elections 2009 and content analytical data on media coverage from at least five media outlets in 27 countries, contributed some relevant findings. By defining agenda congruence as the similarity between a party and an outlet's agenda, I could study determinants of agenda congruence on different levels: party characteristics, outlet characteristics and system determinants.

I find pronounced differences between different types of media outlets. Namely, newspapers (compared to television broadcasts) and outlets with a politically interested audience show higher degrees of congruence with party agendas. Incumbency of a party and the partisanship of media outlets have only weak effects in certain types of party and media systems.

The design applied here was a rather though test for measuring agenda congruence. Compared to other documents such as press releases that are highly influenced by strategic responses to daily events and other party's behaviour, electoral programs indicate a party's ideal agenda (Norris et al., 1999). Moreover, the three week period of analyzed media coverage is relatively short and can in some cases be temporarily far away from the publication of the electoral program. Given this rather conservative test, the finding that on average electoral programs and media coverage share one third of their agenda should be considered relatively high. Still, mass media are far from passing through every message of parties, but still, a significant amount of coverage on policy issues mentioned by parties is present. Moreover, an average very high level of agenda congruence between parties and media could only be possible if parties' agendas in electoral programs would converge which again is not desirable.

In particular in times of electoral campaigns, mass media should serve as a forum to provide an overview and a balance of the parties' different

agendas (Strömbäck, 2005; Hopmann, Van Aelst, and Legnante, 2012). The findings of this chapter are in line with this normative ideal. There is only little evidence for a structural or partisan bias in terms of agenda congruence. In concentrated and medium-fragmented party systems there is no evidence that media favor the agendas of incumbent or large parties. Only in highly fragmented party systems, incumbent parties have a small advantage over opposition parties in terms of agenda congruence.

Moreover, only in countries with very low levels of journalistic independence do media promote the agenda of its affiliated party. This is particularly interesting, because it shows that in most countries the media agenda does not contribute to the polarization of the electorate. If media promoted the agenda of a supported party, this would very likely increase the polarization of the electorate. Assuming a self-selection of voters into the audience of outlets that are in line with their party support and an agenda-setting process from parties over partisan outlets to self-selected voters. This would result in a reinforcement of existing voter beliefs on parties and salient issues. However, as this chain is broken because media outlets do not promote the agenda of a supported party, I can conclude that the media agenda does not contribute to an increase in the polarization of the electorate. This does not exclude that other aspects of media coverage such as the framing of issues or the visibility of actors might contribute to polarization.

Additionally, media provide more information to citizens on parties' issues in fragmented party systems. These systems are also the ones where citizens require more information to differentiate political parties because the political supply is more diverse. And, more politically interested citizens are exposed to media outlets that also provide more information on issues considered as salient by parties.

This chapter has some drawbacks and shortcomings that should be addressed by future research: First, the test of the party size hypothesis was a relatively weak test as the party sample was already limited to relatively large and relevant parties that are represented in parliament. Broadening the sample to small challenger parties could likely alter the results and make party size a substantive and significant factor determining agenda congruence. Second, agenda congruence tended to be hard to explain. Even the full model is only able to explain one fifth of the variation in agenda congruence leaving important influential factors unobserved. Such important omitted influential factors could be correlated with some of the variables in the model which would bias the estimates. However, as there is little prior knowledge on agenda congruence in a cross-national setting there is not much literature to build the model on. Third, the period under study of three weeks media coverage is rather short and it might be that some hypothesized effects could not be detected in a systematic way in such a short time period. Fourth, the analysis is based on european elections. Some findings (or non-findings) might be particularly related to the second-order character of these electins.

This drawback can easily be overcome as soon as there is comparable media coverage for national elections in a large number of countries available.

Congruent agendas are not a sufficient condition that voters get information on parties' programs as it does not guarantee that media mention parties' issue stances or even parties. In the following two empirical chapters, I will examine whether parties' priorities and positions in electoral programs influence how parties are presented in the media.

Chapter 5

Party Strategies and Party–Issue Linkages

5.1 Do Programs Influence Party–Issue Links in Media Coverage?

Gaining voice in the news coverage is one of the most important aims of parties' electoral campaigns.[1] Despite parties' direct campaign efforts and the increasing relevance of social media, the mass media remains the primary source of information on all political matters for most citizens. Particularly during electoral campaigns parties depend on the mass media as their electoral success is strongly related to the number of media appearances they secure (Hopmann et al., 2010b). If parties were absent from the election coverage they would be unable to persuade citizens, put spin on debates, attack their opponents or reframe salient issues.

This chapter focuses on one specific aspect of campaign coverage: the co-appearances of issues and parties. These co-appearances in news coverage – called party–issue linkages – are highly relevant for a party's issue ownership (Walgrave and Swert, 2007). A party is said to "own" an issue if the party profits from a high saliency of this issue, for example because it has a strong track record on this issue, or because it is considered the most competent to deal with the issue, or simply because it is associated with

[1] A modified version of this chapter is accepted and published by Acta Politica in a special issue edited by Sylvia Kritzinger, Susan Banducci and Heiko Giebler with the title "Information and Electoral Competition".The article's title is: Gaining voice in the mass media: The effect of parties' strategies on party–issue linkages in election news coverage. http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/s41269-016-0026-9 Earlier versions were presented at a meeting of the Research Working Group on Party Competition at Humboldt University (2012), the Joint Sessions of the European Consortium for Political Research (2013) in Mainz and an author workshop at the WZB with all authors and the editors of the special issues, and the research colloquium on empirical communication research at the Free University Berlin (2014).

the issue (Petrocik, 1996; Walgrave, Lefevere, and Tresch, 2012). For a long time, issue ownership was considered as rather stable being possessed by parties or not (Budge and Farlie, 1983). However, current research found that issue ownership is dynamic with parties and candidates trying to maintain ownership of issues they already own and trying to steal ownership of issues owned by their competitors (Damore, 2004; Holian, 2004; Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans, 2009; Tresch, Lefevere, and Walgrave, 2015; Dahlberg and Martinsson, 2015). Party–issue linkages in media coverage are one of the main sources of issue ownership. Parties that are linked to certain issues in the news, are considered to be more competent to deal with the issue than other parties (Walgrave and Swert, 2007; Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans, 2009) and – in some cases – more often associated by voters with the issue (Tresch, Lefevere, and Walgrave, 2015). Like media coverage in general, party–issue linkages are selective and limited. When discussing an issue, mass media usually gives voice to one or few parties, but not to all parties. The question to which parties mass media grant voice when discussing an issue will likely depend on factors that influence a party's general visibility and newsworthiness such as a party's size and whether it is in government or opposition. These rather institutional factors do not take into account the behaviour of parties. Moreover, institutional factors can hardly explain differences in party–issue linkages within parties across different issues. Therefore, this chapter analyzes whether mass media systematically link issues to parties based on the parties' issue strategies.

Political parties have to make two key decisions with regard to every issue: will they emphasize or downplay an issue, and will they choose a distinct or a moderate issue position? I hypothesize that journalists use parties' issue strategies as a selection criteria to decide whom to give voice when discussing a particular issue during the electoral campaign. All else equal, when debating an issue, the media should grant more voice to parties with a distinct issue position, to parties that continuously emphasized these issues in the past, and to parties that increase their emphasis at the current election. An analysis of a dataset combining manifesto data (Volkens et al., 2014a) with content analytical data from election news coverage (Kriesi et al., 2012a; Wueest, Höglinger, and Caes, 2012) for 26 elections in the 1990s/2000s in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK lends support to the theorized effect of parties' past and current issue emphasis on the number of party–issue linkages. The findings have important implications that are discussed in more detail in the final section of the chapter.

5.2 Election News Coverage and the Role of Party–Issue Linkages

Politically informed citizens are essential for the functioning of democracy (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). The role of information is particularly crucial before elections. Even if parties' electoral campaigns try to address voters directly using leaflets, posters, and advertisement, the mass media are still the most important source of information on politics, elections and parties. As media coverage on political parties and issues is necessarily limited and selective, parties compete over news coverage. This chapter deals with a particular aspect of media coverage: the association of parties and issues. These party–issue linkages can have different forms. A party–issue linkage can be a quote from a party's politician or a whole interview in regard to a specific issue, or the mentioning of a party's issue position, or any other coverage that ties a party to an issue. Most policy-based media coverage will include politicians as sources and thereby establish party–issue linkages. Party–issue linkages are found to shape voters' perceptions of parties, as well as of issues and frames, and thereby affect electoral choices and the electoral competition in numerous ways:

First, party–issue linkages in the media can serve to create, uphold or change a party's ownership of an issue. Issue ownership "refers to the link between specific parties and issues in the minds of voters." (Walgrave, Tresch, and Lefevere, 2015) Parties are said to "own" an issue if they have an electoral advantage when the issue becomes salient in the public. Issue ownership has two dimensions: First, issue ownership can either describe a voters perceived competence of a party to handle an issue (Petrocik, 1996). For example many voters consider green parties as the most competent to deal with environmental issues. Second, issue ownership can also be understood as voters' associations of parties with issues – independent of their competence evaluations (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Tresch, 2012). Commonly, voters associate the issue of immigration with radical right parties although this link is not necessarily an ascription of competence to handle this issue. On the one hand, issue ownership theory explains voters' electoral choice as they vote for the party that owns the issues they consider as salient (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Tresch, 2012; Bélanger and Meguid, 2008). On the other hand, issue ownership theory explains parties' issue emphases becaues they try to set "owned" issues on the public agenda to prime voters. Issue ownership was long considered to be stable and exclusive. However, recent studies have shown that issue ownership is neither stable nor exclusive, but dynamic and partial (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans, 2009; Geys, 2012). Moreover, media coverage is a major source of issue ownership (Walgrave and Swert, 2007). If a party manages to be linked to an issue in the election coverage, it may gain ownership of new issues and maintain or

reinforce existing ownership of issues (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans, 2009; Tresch, Lefevere, and Walgrave, 2015). Party–issue linkages in election news coverage are one of the major sources of a party's issue ownership.

Second, party–issue linkages influence how voters perceive frames associated with the focal issue. Voters perceive and adopt frames differently depending on which party sponsors the frames (Slothuus and de Vreese, 2010). Voters are more likely to adopt a frame if it is sponsored by a party they support than if it is expressed by a rival party. All things considered, parties can benefit very much from party–issue linkages in media coverage. Gaining party–issue linkages in the mass media is therefore a central goal of parties' campaign efforts.

The analysis of party–issue linkages is related to – but still distinct from – two fields of research that have been thouroughly addressed in the past: a party's general visibility in media coverage and parties' attempts to set the media agenda. The first one is crucial for a party's electoral success. Being neglected by the media inhibits parties from spinning debates, reframing issues and criticizing their competitors. More broadly speaking, parties require media attention to get their messages out. Therefore, it is not surprising that the amount of attention attributed to a party in election news coverage is a very strong predictor of a party's electoral result (Hopmann et al., 2010b): The more visibile a party in election news coverage, the more votes a party will receive at the election day. Consequentially, research analyzed why and which parties and politicians get into the news. This line of research looked mostly at general characteristics of parties and politicians such as whether a party is the incumbent (Schoenbach, De Ridder, and Lauf, 2001; Hopmann, de Vreese, and Albaek, 2011; Green-Pedersen, Mortensen, and Thesen, 2015), or whether a politician is the leader of a party (Tresch, 2009; Midtbø, 2011). However, this line of research has done little to explain a party's varying visibility across issues – an idea that is at the core of party–issue linkages.

The field of party media agenda setting (or agenda building) specifically adresses differences between issues and deals with the question of whether a party manages to increase the saliency of certain issues on the public or the media agenda (Cobb, Ross, and Ross, 1976). The focus of interest is whether the party agenda influences the saliency of issues on the media agenda (Kleinnijenhuis and Rietberg, 1995). However, some scholars also analyzed the similarity between party agendas and *reported* party agendas in media coverage – so far producing mixed evidence. In a study on the UK general elections of 2005, Brandenburg found that parties' agendas correlate quite high with parties' agendas reported in the media (Brandenburg, 2006). Similarly, a study analyzing press releases and news coverage at the 2007 Danish parliamentary elections found parties to be differently successful in getting their messages in the news (Hopmann et al., 2010b). In contrast, Helbling and Tresch (2011) found no connection between parties' issue em-

phasis in electoral programs and in the respective news coverage on the issue of European integration. Similarly, Petrocik (2003) found that presidential candidates' issue emphasis strategy were not reflected by the issue content of the campaign coverage in the New York Times. Most of these studies evaluate simple correlations of two agendas that could be driven by some salient issues on both agendas, but do not model the linking of parties and issues as a selection process of journalists. Moreover, many of these studies are based on few elections or issues. Finally, they do not differentiate whether the reflection of a party's issue emphasis is due to a party's issue reputation or due to its issue engagement during the campaign.

Both factors, the saliency of issues on the media agenda and a party's visibility are certainly important and relevant for a party's electoral success. However, only the association of parties and issues – the party–issue linkages – are relevant for a party's issue ownership. The following section illustrates parties' issue strategies and derives hypotheses about how they influence party–issue linkages in media coverage.

5.3 Media Selection and Parties' Issue Strategies

Research on party competition has developed two approaches to parties' issue strategies: position-based approaches and emphasis-based approaches. The former approach is heavily influenced by Anthony Downs' Economic Theory of Democracy (1957). He claimed that party competition is shaped by conflicts over policy alternatives which can be understood in a spatial way. In general, parties can choose between two strategies. First, a party can choose a moderate position in order to win more voters in the center of the political spectrum and to draw voters away from other parties. Such a strategy is popular in two-party systems. This however comes at the costs of loosing voters at the margins and risking alienating party activists (Robertson, 1976). Second, instead of moderating a position, a party can differentiate its issue position. In particular in multi-party systems parties' issue positions are expected to diverge from one another because parties try to find positions that make them distinguishable from their competitors. Kitschelt (1994) called this strategy 'product differentiation'. In particular, small parties take distinct positions to differentiate themselves from their mainstream competitors (Wagner, 2012a).

I expect the mass media to link issues to parties that have issue positions distinct from their competitors for the following two reasons: First, professional norms in journalism suggest that in competitive democracies the media should inform citizens about a broad range of opinions and positions (Strömbäck, 2005). Most countries in Europe show increasing levels of professionalization in journalism in the last decades (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Journalists adhering to these norms will cover parties with diverse

viewpoints to capture the whole range of opinions and positions.

Second, journalists try to frame elections as conflicts (de Vreese, 2004). The framing of elections as conflicts is one of the most prominent ways to cover the competition between parties in times of elections (Schuck et al., 2013; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). Conflict frames are popular because conflicts are a news factor, making a story more newsworthy, and thereby more likely to be selected by journalists (Staab, 1990). Journalists are expected to choose parties with very distinct issue positions in order to frame an issue as a conflict between political parties. Parties covering similar issue positions would not be suitable for the construction of such a conflict in the news. So, the more a party's position deviates from the position of the other parties, the easier a journalist can frame an issue as a conflict between political parties.

Issue Distinctiveness Hypothesis: *The mass media link issues with parties who have distinct issue positions.*

The second approach to party competition was inspired by the observation that parties' issue emphases during the electoral campaign varies drastically between parties and elections. On the one hand, issue emphasis varies between parties because parties are expected to emphasize their "own" issues. Instead of engaging in a dialogue or conflict on different policy alternatives on the same issue, parties are said to "talk past each other" by selectively emphasizing some issues and downplaying others (Budge and Farlie, 1983: 23). Party competition is then structured by parties' differences in issue priorities, rather than by different issue positions. Party's issue emphasis strategy is constrained by its constituencies (Petrocik, 1996). Parties with ties or origins in certain demographic, religious or professional groups are constrained by the preferences of these groups. Parties need to address their core issues to mobilize their own activists and supporters. A party with many unionist members and voters cannot suddenly downplay labour issues because it would lose to risk its core voters and members.

On the other hand, issue emphasis varies between elections with some issues being emphasized by parties at one election and downplayed in other elections because parties are said to "ride the wave" of public opinion (Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1994). They cannot only emphasize owned issues as this would risk neglecting socially relevant issues and loosing media visibility and credibility. According to this approach, parties pick issues considered problematic or salient by the public in order to appear responsive to the voter's desires (Wagner and Meyer, 2014) and to the party system agenda (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010).

As issue emphasis is a zero-sum game parties often face the decision whether they emphasize their owned issues or whether they adress issues salient on the public agenda. Most often this results in a mix or an alternation of both strategies. In the long-term, parties regularly and continuously

emphasize their core issues and downplay issues owned by their competitors. However, in the short-term, a change in public opinion, external shocks and their competitors strategies might cause parties to deviate from their long-term strategy of emphasizing owned issues and cause them to adapt their issue emphasis strategy. Here, I argue that journalists consider both components of a party's issue emphasis strategy when deciding whether they will link an issue with a party: a party's continuous emphasis of an issue in the past (long-term emphasis) and an increase at the current election compared to its past emphasis (short-term emphasis).

A party's long-term issue emphasis strategy might increase the linking of the party with the issue by journalists because parties that emphasize an issue over a long time signal a credible priority for this issue. Similar to voters, journalists will associate specific parties with issues or consider some parties as the most competent to handle the issue. The continuity of such strategies over time creates and upholds a party's issue reputation among journalists. Research in the US showed that parties receive more favorable news coverage on "owned" issues (Hayes, 2008b). When debating an issue that comes on the agenda, journalists will give voice to parties that are known to care about a problem not since yesterday, but for a long time. Being linked to certain issues in media coverage, is then not a reflection of a party's immediate campaign efforts, but rather of a party's issue reputation among journalists.

A party's short term issue emphasis describes whether a party emphasizes an issue more than it emphasized the issue in the past. So, the short term issue emphasis is the deviation from the long-term emphasis strategy. This can be the emphasis of an issue that a party usually downplays or the decision to even more focus on an issue that a party already emphasizes a lot. Short-term emphasis may matters for party–issue linkages for two reasons: First, parties that put more emphasis on an issue during their electoral campaign send out their message on different channels, directly and indirectly affecting the amount of information available to journalists. If a party puts more emphasis on an issue than usual, journalists simply have more information available upon which to rely when debating an issue. Particularly in times of elections, the mass media are susceptible to the attempts of parties to shape the agenda (Walgrave and van Aelst, 2006), as journalists heavily rely on parties as sources for political stories.

Second, a change in a party's issue strategy could be more newsworthy than a party's ordinary issue emphasis strategy that reflects rather the "business as usual". Experimental research has shown that journalists are more likely to make a story out of a press release issued by a party if the issue of the release is not owned by the party (Helfer and Aelst, 2016). This is explained by the fact that a party that emphasizes an unowned issue is unexpected. Because unexpectedness is a news factor, this increases the newsworthiness of an event (Staab, 1990). As journalists select stories and

speakers by the number of news factors, a party emphasizing an issue more than usual should increase the likelihood of being selected as a source.

Accordingly, I expect that mass media link issues to parties that emphasized these issues continuously in the past because and to parties that increased their emphasis compared to their long-term emphasis.

Long-Term Issue Emphasis Hypothesis: *The mass media link issues to parties who emphasized these issues continually in the past.*

Short-Term Issue Emphasis Hypothesis: *The mass media link issues to parties who emphasize these issues more than they did in the past.*

I expect the effect of parties' issue strategies on party-issue linking to vary depending on the status of a party. The attack-defend model developed by Thesen (2011) suggests that government and opposition parties are covered differently by the media. The separation between opposition and government parties strongly structures party competition. Public conflicts over issues are most often conflicts between government and opposition. Opposition attacks, and government defends or reacts. Opposition and government parties are both expected to engage more on issues advantageous to them. However, the competition between opposition and government parties is asymmetrical as governments are responsible for handling issues and solving problems and opposition parties are not. This changes how they are treated by the media. Government parties are held accountable by the media for all issues, whereas opposition parties can choose to speak only on issues favorable to them. Government parties are given voice by media not because of their issue strategy, but because they are responsible to handle the issue. In contrast, when giving voice to the opposition, journalists have to decide to which party they will give voice. Using parties' issue strategies as selection heuristic is therefore much more plausible for opposition parties than for government parties.

Government/Opposition Hypothesis: *The effect of issue strategies on party–issue links is more pronounced for opposition parties than for incumbent parties.*

A second source of variation in the systematic linking of party's issue strategies and party–issue linkages is the type of media outlet. Media outlet can either be a quality outlet or a sensationalistic. Quality outlets provide lots of political information and aim at politically interested and often highly educated audience. Sensationalist media target a lower educated audience, cover events in a more sensationalist way and are often read by politically less involved citizens. While quality media is expected to provide more background information and analyses of structural relationships, sensationalist media are expected to be event-driven. Accordingly, quality media should rather rely on using a party's long-term issue emphasis strategy as a selection heuristics. In contrast, sensationalist media is expected to cover

current affairs and therefore rely more on a party's short-term emphasis as a selection heuristic.

Broadsheet/Tabloid Hypothesis: *Quality media weigh a party's long-term emphasis more and a party's short-term emphasis less than sensationalist media.*

5.4 Design, Data & Methodology

Data

The testing of these hypotheses requires two kinds of data: measures of parties' issue positions and emphases, and data on media coverage to measure the number of party–issue linkages.

Parties' expressed preferences can drastically differ depending on the channel of communication under investigation. A study on Danish parties indicated surprisingly little overlap between the agendas of the same parties across different channels such as tv leader debates, advertisements, electoral programs and letters to the editors by party leaders (Elmelund-Præstekær, 2011). Therefore the choice of documents and data to measure parties' issue positions and issue emphases will likely have an effect on the results of this study and therefore needs to be well chosen and justified. Speeches, press releases, advertisement and electoral programs all come along with certain advantages and disadvantages for studying parties' issue strategies. I decided for electoral programs to measure party's preferences as the following advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

First, electoral programs represent a party's policy program for the upcoming legislative term and are adopted at party conventions or at least by the party leadership thereby representing the preferences of the whole party - not only a party's faction or the opinion of individual politicians. Second, electoral programs are regarded as to measure the 'ideal' agenda as "parties are in sole control of the content of electoral manifestos" (Norris et al., 1999, p.62); much more so than for example speeches by parliamentarians or party leaders. Third, electoral programs are expected to set the tone and themes of the electoral campaign. A claim underlined by qualitative interviews with party campaigners who state that electoral programs set the guideline of the electoral campaign (see Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2011). Fourth, electoral programs are usually published before the main electoral campaign starts. This guarantees that data on issue emphasis and positions derived from electoral programs is measured before data on election news coverage becomes available and thereby reduces problems of endogeneity. The use of (post election) expert or voter surveys to measure issue emphasis and/or issue position would for example be problematic as experts might be influenced by the media coverage. Fifth, electoral programs are published

by almost all parties in established democracies in a similar way, thereby guaranteeing a high comparability over time and across countries.

On the other hand, electoral programs also have some disadvantages. On the one hand they are published only once during the electoral campaign and therefore cannot capture any dynamic or changes in parties' issue strategies which could be covered by the analysis of speeches or press releases. Moreover, electoral programs are said to set the tone of the electoral campaign, however they are mostly directed towards a focal party's supporter and thereby targeting an internal audience instead of the mass media. Compared to other documents that would allow to measure parties' issue strategies such as press releases or advertisement that might more closely follow media logics, electoral programs provide a rather tough test as they address an internal audience and do not allow for any dynamic.

The most common data source for electoral programs is the dataset by the Manifesto Project (Budge et al., 2001; Klingemann et al., 2006; Volkens et al., 2014a). The Manifesto dataset provides content analytical information from electoral programs covering all major parties for democratic elections in over 50 countries since 1945. For the production of the manifesto dataset, country experts split the text of each electoral program into quasi-sentences (statements) to which one of the 56 issue categories are then allocated (see table 7 in the appendix). The dataset indicates the share of quasi-sentences allocated to each issue within each electoral program – thereby indicating a party's respective emphasis on the various 56 issues. The use of opposing issue categories (for example welfare state expansion and welfare state limitation) allow for the scaling of issue positions as well (Lowe et al., 2011). Although the methodology has been criticized for a low reliability (Mikhaylov, Laver, and Benoit, 2012, see also Lacewell and Werner, 2013) and problematic source documents in some countries (Hansen, 2008), the Manifesto dataset has been successfully used to measure parties left-right positions (Adams, 2012), issue positions and emphases on (among many others) such different issues as immigration (Alonso and Fonseca, 2012; Abou-Chadi, 2016), decentralization (Amat and Falcó-Gimeno, 2014), or military expenses (Whitten and Williams, 2011).

The second dataset used in this chapter provides content analytical data of election news coverage generated by the "Political Change in a Globalizing World" project (Kriesi et al., 2012a). This dataset covers the election news coverage in six countries (Austria, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK) with 4-5 elections in the 90s/2000s. Kriesi and his colleagues coded articles from two newspapers in each country. They chose to analyze one quality newspaper (broadsheet) and one sensationalist newspaper (tabloid) in each of the six countries. The sample mainly consists of articles related to national political parties or the upcoming elections published in the two months before the elections. The coded text segments include the title, the lead and the first paragraph from the articles in the quality newspa-

pers, and the whole article in tabloid newspapers. Adverts in press coverage paid by political parties are excluded from the sample because paid media is expected to follow different selection logics. All analyses shown here are based on the media coverage from both press outlets per country. Conducting the analyses for broadsheet and tabloid newspapers separately produces very similar results.

Unfortunately, Kriesi and colleagues decided to code presidential elections in France while the Manifesto Project analyzes parliamentary manifestos. The remaining five countries (Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK) are quite diverse in regard to their political system. The UK is a strongly majoritarian system with a two-party system. In contrast, the Netherlands and Switzerland have a have highly fragmented multi-party systems. Germany and Austria are also multi-party systems with coalition governments, however less fragmented than the Dutch party system. Table B.1 details the remaining parties, elections and media outlets under investigation.

The media dataset provides information in the form of core-sentences (Kleinnijenhuis and Pennings, 2001). A core sentence contains three elements: a subject (here: a party), an object (here: an issue or a party) and a direction (-1, 0, +1). The direction reflects the stance of a party on an issue but is not of interest in this chapter. I use the 20,000 core-sentences connecting parties with political issues. The parties sampled by Kriesi et al. are the same as the parties covered by the Manifesto Project and can be easily matched. Originally, the researchers of the Kriesi project coded issues inductively without any given categories. In an incremental procedure they aggregated all coded issues into 84 issue categories. The issue coding scheme of the Manifesto Dataset and that of the Kriesi et al. dataset are different. However, both schemes can be scaled down to match eleven issues common in both datasets. These eleven issues include the traditional issues in political debates such as the degree of state intervention in the economy and the expansion or limitation of the welfare state, budgetary politics and domestic security as well as issues considered as more recent such as European integration, the protection of the environment, immigration, peace and military expenses. Tables 5.1 (and table B.2 in the appendix) provide an overview of the analyzed issues and a scheme used to match the two coding schemes.

Table 5.1: Overview of issue categories

issue	description
Economic Liberalism	Support for deregulation, more competition, and privatization; opposition to market regulation; opposition to economic protectionism in agriculture and other sectors of society
Welfare	Support for an expansion of the welfare state; defence against welfare state retrenchment; support for tax reforms with a redistributive character; calls for employment and healthcare programmes
Budget	Support for rigid budgetary policy, reduction of state deficit, cuts in expenditures, reduction of taxes without direct effects on redistribution
Peace & Internationalism	Support for international cooperation (not EU and NATO), support for UN
Minorities & Liberalism	Support for cultural diversity, support for right to abortion and euthanasia, traditional moral values, support for liberal drug policy, support for minorities
Europe	Support for European integration, including enlargement; support for EU membership in the cases of Switzerland and Austria
Culture & Education	Support for education, culture, and scientific research
Anti-Immigration	Support for tough immigration and integration policy
Military	Support for the armed forees (including NATO), for a strong national defenee, and for nuclear weapons
Domestic Security	Support for more law-and-order, the fight against crime, and denouncing political corruption
Environment	Support for environmental protection; opposition to nuclear energy
Source:	partially from Kriesi et al., 2008, p.59-60

Dependent and Independent Variables

The manifesto dataset has only one observation for each issue-party-election combination because it is based on one document per election and party. Therefore, it is necessary to aggregate the core-sentences in the media dataset to the same level. The party–issue core-sentences are aggregated to election-party-media-outlet-issue combinations. The dependent variable is then the number of *party–issue linkages* (core-sentences) in the media coverage of one press outlet during an electoral campaign. This variable is a count variable with an empirical range from 0 to 128.

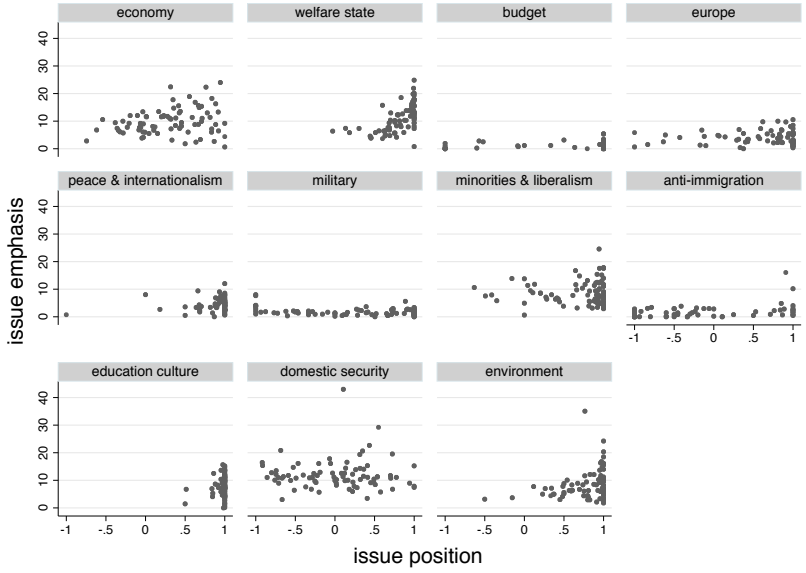
The *issue distinctiveness* requires information on the parties' issue positions. The manifesto dataset is well-known for allowing researchers the calculation of parties' left-right positions. Similarly, the data also allow for the calculation of *issue* positions. The approach chosen here is similar to the standard approach for calculating general left-right positions, namely by subtracting the total share of left (or pro) categories from the total share of right (or contra) categories. However, in this case the position would be influenced by the total number of statements (also the ones not included in the pro or contra categories). This might be plausible for the general left-right dimension. However, for this chapter I am interested in position scores that are independent from the salience of the issues in order to distinguish analytically between issue positions and issue emphasis. Therefore, I follow the suggestion by Laver and Garry (2000) and divide the score by the total shares of pro and contra statements in order to make them independent from the emphasis of these issues. The formula is:

$$POS = \frac{PRO - CON}{PRO + CON} \tag{5.1}$$

where PRO is the share of statements in favor of an issue and CON the share of statements opposing an issue. The scale runs from -1 to +1 and ranges from positions strongly against to positions strongly in favor of an issue. The distinctiveness of an issue position is then calculated as the distance to the election-issue mean. This mean is calculated as the mean of all parties at this election, weighted by their vote share.

A party's *issue emphasis* is measured as the share (in percentages) of quasi-sentences in the electoral program related to one of the eleven issues (see table B.2). The higher the number, the more a party emphasizes an issue. Units can be interpreted as percentages of quasi-sentences of the electoral program. To differentiate between a party's short-term and long-term issue emphasis strategy, a party's issue emphasis can be split into two components. The following equations illustrate this decomposition into two variables. A party's long-term issue emphasis *le* is a party's mean issue emphasis over the past three elections. For parties with missing data for the lags 2 and/or 3, it is the mean over the available lags.

Figure 5.1: Parties' issue strategies



$$le_t = \frac{(e_{t-1} + e_{t-2} + e_{t-3})}{3} \tag{5.2}$$

And a party's short-term emphasis is the difference in emphasis at time t to its long-term emphasis. If a party decides against a short-term deviation from its long-term emphasis, the short-term emphasis will be zero. A negative value of short-term emphasis indicates that a party emphasizes an issue less than usual, a positive short-term emphasis indicates the opposite.

$$se_t = e_t - le_t \tag{5.3}$$

The correlation between a party's general issue emphasis and issue distinctiveness is significant, but very small (Pearson's r:-0.056; p <.01). The two issue strategies are not only theoretically distinct, but also empirically independent.

Model and Control Variables

The data are structured as a stacked dataset with 2293 election-party-media-outlet-issue combinations from 26 elections in the five countries and two newspapers per country.

The dependent variable (the number of party–issue linkages in media coverage) has a few characteristics that impede the use of a standard ordinary least squares regression. First, it is a count variable with the theoretical

minimum of zero and no theoretical maximum. Second, the distribution contains large number of zeros where parties are never linked to a specific issue. Moreover, the distribution has a long tail with a few instances of very high counts. This leads to a standard deviation (11.2) that is higher than the mean (8.1). A characteristic that is called overdispersion. Traditionally, poisson and negative binomial models are used to analyze count data. I decided to run a negative binomial model as they are better suited to analyze data that is overdispersed (Long and Freese, 2014).

The number of party–issue links is strongly dependent on the overall saliency of an issue. The more salient an issue is in the news, the more often all parties will be associated with this issue. To control for this I include the total number of party–issue linkages for each issue within the coverage of one press outlet as an exposure variable. Moreover, I expect the effect of a party's issue emphasis to matter if it differs from their competitors' issue emphasis. Therefore, I include the average issue emphasis of the focal party's competitors as a further control variable in the model.

The degree of issue consensus might have an impact on how an issue is debated in the media (Schuck et al., 2011). At the same time, it is closely related to a party's issue distinctiveness. I use the standard deviation of the competitors issue positions as an indicator of whether and how consensual an issue is debated in a country. Calculating the standard deviation on the competitors positions only (not including the focal party) counters potential problems with multicollinearity and endogeneity as such an indicator would be highly correlated with the measure of distinctiveness in small party systems.

The number of party–issue linkages in media coverage will likely be influenced by the relevance and prominence of a party. To control for the incumbency status of a party, I created a dummy variable indicating whether a party is an incumbent or in opposition. Besides the incumbent status, the size and resources of a party influence a party's general visibility in election news coverage (Hopmann, de Vreese, and Albaek, 2011). In order to account for this I included a party's vote share as an additional control variable.

Additionally, I included one dummy variable for each party, thereby controlling for all time-constant characteristics of parties which might increase their general visibility in election news coverage. Moreover, I included a dummy for every election-outlet combination to control for effects specific to campaign coverage within a media outlet at a specific campaign such as the different number of parties across elections. The size of the party system will probably have an impact on how likely it is that a party will be linked to a certain issue. In smaller party systems, journalists have to choose between fewer possible actors, whereas in large party systems journalists have to select between more actors. Table 5.2 provides summary statistics for all variables.

To control for serial correlation, I show in the robustness section that a

Table 5.2: Summary statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Number of Party-Issue Linkages	8.05	11.17	0	128
issue emphasis	6.49	5.74	0	42.98
issue distinctiveness	0.3	0.34	0	1.85
mean issue emphasis of competitors	6.5	4.68	0	21.76
incumbent	0.48	0.5	0	1
issue polarization of competitors	0.39	0.29	0	1.13
vote share	18.98	11.61	1.96	43.21
issue salience in media coverage	39.41	34.21	1	223
long-term issue emphasis	6.57	5.23	0	31.91
short-term issue emphasis	-0.08	4.48	-20.75	25.57
N		2293		

model including a lagged dependent variable replicates the results. A lagged dependent variable in a negative binomial model can only capture a general trend and not a dynamic or cyclical process (Brandt and Williams, 2001). However, as the panels in the data are very short (median panel length 3, maximum 5), there is only little possibility to observe any other dynamic than a general trend.

The use of cluster-robust standard errors for election-issue clusters accounts for the non-independence of the observations.

5.5 Empirical Analysis

Results

Do parties' issue strategies influence the number of party–issue linkages in news coverage? Table 5.3 provides first answers to this question. The dispersion parameter alpha is significantly different from zero (Likelihood-ratio test: $\chi^2 = 1996.92$; p <0.001 in Model 2), justifying the use of a negative binomial model over a poisson model. All coefficients are log-transformed and should be interpreted as multiplicative effects: eg. the coefficient 1.936 on the incumbent variable in model 1 indicates an increase of the expected number of party–issue linkages by the factor 1.936 if a party is an incumbent compared to if the same party were in opposition.

Model 1 is a baseline model, including only the control variables, not yet the main independent variables of interest. Before discussing the effects of the independent variables, I will briefly discuss the effects of the control variables. As already said, incumbency drastically increases the number of party–issue linkages. Mass media link parties in office almost twice as much to all issues (all else equal) compared to a party in opposition. As the

party-dummies control for time-constant effects of parties, the effect of the incumbency variable is a net incumbency effect.

Similarly, the size of a party, measured by its vote share, also has a positive significant effect on the number of party–issue linkages. A change of vote share of 1% increases the expected counts by the factor 1.025. Accordingly, a change of one standard deviation in vote share (11.6 %) increases the expected number of counts by the factor 1.33.

Table 5.3: Negative binomial regression: Predicting the number of party-issue linkages in election news coverage at national elections in Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK (1991-2007)

	(1) controls only		(2) with ind. variables	
Number of Party-Issue Linkages				
mean issue emphasis of competitors	0.998	(0.004)	0.974***	(0.007)
incumbent	1.936***	(0.111)	1.942***	(0.113)
issue polarization of competitors	1.070	(0.071)	1.059	(0.076)
vote share	1.025***	(0.005)	1.025***	(0.005)
issue distinctiveness			1.107	(0.077)
long-term issue emphasis			1.031***	(0.008)
short-term issue emphasis			1.031***	(0.005)
election/outlet dummies	Yes		Yes	
party dummies	Yes		Yes	
Alpha	0.329		0.314	
Deviance R2	0.435		0.452	
BIC	12051.2		12004.1	
Loglikelihood	-5750.9		-5715.7	
N	2293		2293	

* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001

The overall salience of an issue is used as an exposure variable.

Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses.

The statistics at the bottom of table 5.3 indicate that the model including the main independent variables of interest fit the data better than the baseline model. The Deviance R2, the Bayesian Information Criterium and the loglikelihood attest model 2 a better fit than model 1.

The first finding is that we find no support for the issue distinctivness hypothesis. The coefficient of issue distinctiveness is substantively small and not statistically significant. Recall that issue distinctiveness is measured as the distance between a party's issue position and the (weighted) mean across all parties at the election. The standard deviation of issue distinctiveness is 0.34. A change in issue distinctiveness of one-standard deviation would increase the expected number of counts only by the factor 1.03. The strat-

egy of "product differentiation" by choosing a distinct issue position does not influence the selection of the mass media. Moreover, the degree of polarization on an issue does not have any effect on the number of party–issue linkages. So, when debating an issue, the mass media grant voice to parties regardless of their issue position.

In contrast, there are a significant effects of short- and long-term issue emphasis on the number of party–issue linkages. A one unit increase in short-term issue emphasis increases the expected number of counts by the factor 1.03. The standard deviation of short-term issue emphasis is 4.5; an increase in issue emphasis by one standard deviation would increase the expected number of party–issue linkages by the factor 1.14. A change of one standard deviation in the long-term issue emphasis (5.23) would similarly increase the expected number of counts by the factor 1.17. At first, this effect of issue emphasis strategies on election news coverage seems small. However, the effects mentioned refer to one party–issue-election-outlet combination. Considering that this effect is at work for every party–issue combination in all news publications, parties' issue emphasis strategies substantially shape election news coverage.

Moreover, the effect of the mean issue emphasis of a focal party's competitors is significant in model 2. The more other parties emphasize an issue (holding a focal party's issue emphasis constant), the more the number of a focal party's issue linkages decreases. So, the more a party emphasized an issue in the past and the more it emphasizes the issue compared to its past emphasis in its electoral program, the more the media link this issue to the focal party. Similarly, the more a focal party's competitors emphasize an issue, the less a focal party is associated with that issue in election news coverage. The empirical results so far suggest that parties' issue emphasis strategies matter for party–issue linkages in election news coverage. When covering an issue, journalists grant voice to political parties that emphasized an issue in the past and to parties that increase their emphasis of the focal issue compared to its past emphasis. Long-term and short-term issue emphasis strategies matter for gaining voice in election news coverage.

Table 5.4 and 5.5 presents models to test whether these effects are moderated by the type of party and the type of media outlet. Model 1 in Table 5.4 is based on broadsheet newspapers only; model 2 on tabloid newspapers only. The coefficients suggest modest support for the hypothesis. Short-term emphasis has a larger coefficient than long-term emphasis for tabloid newspapers, while it is the other way round for broadsheet newspapers. However, in both cases the coefficients are not significantly different from each other.[2] Similarly, model 1 in table 5.5 tests the Government/Opposition Hypothesis that expects that the effects of issue emphasis on party–issue linking

[2] A model using an interaction term to account for the different effect sizes for tabloid and broadsheet newspapers confirms these findings.

should be more pronounced for opposition than for incumbent parties. The interaction term is not significant. A marginal effects plot (not shown) corroborate this. The model provides no support for any systematic differences in the effect size of the issue emphasis variables between government and opposition parties.

Table 5.4: Negative binomial regression: Predicting the number of party-issue linkages in election news coverage at national elections in Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK (1991-2007)

	(1) Broadsheet		(2) Tabloids	
Number of Party-Issue Linkages				
mean issue emphasis of competitors	0.975**	(0.008)	0.973***	(0.007)
incumbent	2.068***	(0.141)	1.810***	(0.117)
issue polarization of competitors	1.002	(0.084)	1.123	(0.097)
vote share	1.026***	(0.005)	1.024***	(0.007)
issue distinctiveness	1.149	(0.092)	1.054	(0.090)
long-term issue emphasis	1.031***	(0.009)	1.031***	(0.008)
short-term issue emphasis	1.026***	(0.005)	1.035***	(0.006)
election/outlet dummies	Yes		Yes	
party dummies	Yes		Yes	
Alpha	0.284		0.297	
Deviance R2	0.452		0.494	
BIC	6249.1		5814.5	
Loglikelihood	-2944.9		-2724.2	
N	1150		1143	

* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001

The overall salience of an issue is used as an exposure variable.

Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses.

Robustness

A replication of model 2 including a lagged dependent variable to control for serial correlation produces very similar results (see table B.3). The lagged dependent variable is not significant suggesting that serial correlation is not an issue. Although the effect of short term emphasis is slightly smaller, the effect remains statistically significant. Up to now, the presented models pooled party–issue linkages from different issues into one model. Although the control variables for the issue polarization and the mean emphasis of competitors account for important differences between issues, it is still possible that the findings are not robust across issues. Unfortunately, due to the small number of cases per issue, it is not possible to run issue-specific

Table 5.5: Negative binomial regression: Predicting the number of party-issue linkages in election news coverage at national elections in Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK (1991-2007)

	(1) Gov/Opp	
Number of Party-Issue Linkages		
mean issue emphasis of competitors	0.975***	(0.006)
incumbent	2.099***	(0.176)
issue polarization of competitors	1.060	(0.077)
vote share	1.026***	(0.005)
issue distinctiveness	1.106	(0.078)
incumbent party	1	(.)
long-term issue emphasis	1.036***	(0.009)
incumbent party × long-term issue emphasis	0.988	(0.008)
short-term issue emphasis	1.036***	(0.007)
incumbent party × short-term issue emphasis	0.989	(0.009)
election/outlet dummies	Yes	
party dummies	Yes	
Alpha	0.313	
Deviance R2	0.452	
BIC	12015.2	
Loglikelihood	-5713.6	
N	2293	

* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001

The overall salience of an issue is used as an exposure variable.

Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses.

models. The biggest difference between issues is that the matching of issues from different schemes produces sometimes issue strategies for issue domains and sometimes for very specific issues depending on the coding scheme. If the codes for specific issues exist in both coding schemes, they can be mapped easily, otherwise they have to be aggregated and be mapped to an issue domain. A replication of the model on the most specific issues (namely the issues of european integration, peace & internationalism, military, anti-immigration, culture & education) corroborates the findings above. The effects found for issue emphasis are even stronger than in the prior models. Still, the model does not provide any support for the issue distinctiveness hypothesis.

Do these findings hold across different countries? The results are robust to a jackknife test running the same model excluding one country at a time (see table B.4 in the appendix). The effect sizes differ only marginally depending on which country is excluded. Calculating country-specific models is challenging as the number of cases drops significantly and standard errors get larger (see table B.5 in the appendix). The finding that issue distinctiveness has no significant effect is robust. The estimate of issue distinctiveness never reaches conventional levels of significance. Despite the smaller number of cases, three out of five models produce significant effects on both issue emphasis variables of similar size compared to the pooled model (Austria, Netherlands, Switzerland). In two models (UK and Germany), the effects of issue emphasis are positive, however not significant. Due to the larger standard errors, it is hard to say whether this is a substantial difference. It is plausible to argue that journalists are more in need of selection heuristics in countries with more fragmented party systems such as the Netherlands or Switzerland as media coverage is necessarily more selective. However, the small number of cases and countries in our sample limits the generalizability of this finding and leaves room future research to dig deeper into the question whether and why the effectiveness of party's issue emphasis strategies to gain party–issue linkages in election news coverage varies between countries.

5.6 Discussion

The main finding of this chapter is that the mass media link issues to parties that emphasize these issues in their electoral programs. In other words, a party's issue emphasis strategy is reflected in election news coverage. This finding contradicts the results of a study by Helbling and Tresch (2011) that found that a party's issue emphasis in manifestos is not reflected in election news coverage. Their study is based on similar data but limited to the issue of European integration and their claims were based on correlations without controlling for any confounding factors such as the overall saliency of an issue

or the incumbency of a party. The effect of issue emphasis on the number of party–issue linkages can be separated into two effects: short-term changes in a party's emphasis, as well as the long-term average emphasis. Both effect the number of party–issue linkages in election news coverage. This suggests that two mechanisms are at work. One the one hand, journalists give voice to parties that have a good and stable reputation for handling certain issues. On the other hand, parties' campaign efforts affect journalist's selection of parties when covering an issue. This might explain why issue ownership is neither fully stable nor completely volatile (Petrocik, 1996; Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans, 2009). The link between issue emphasis in manifestos and party–issue links in media coverage is not moderated by the status of the party. The mass media link government and opposition parties in the same way to the issues these parties emphasize. There is also only very modest differences between the types of media outlet. Quality media show a very weak tendency to weigh a party's long-term emphasis more than a party's short term emphasis when comparing them to tabloid newspapers who show a similar not very robust tendency to weigh short-term factors more heavily than long-term factors. The search for conditioning and moderating factors was not very successfull. The strength and stability of the manifesto–media link seems to be largely indepedent of external factors.

The second important result of this chapter is a non-finding: parties' issue positions have no impact on the number of party–issue linkages in election news coverage. Neither do media favor parties with distinct issue positions, nor do they favor parties with moderate issue positions. When covering an issue, the mass media give voice to political parties independent of their issue position. "Product differentiation" (Kitschelt, 1994) in terms of issue positioning does not increase a party's chances of being linked to an issue. Although there might be situations when parties have incentives to take up a distinct or extreme position (Wagner, 2012b), the media do not create these incentives (see also Pas and Vliegenthart, 2016). This non-finding suggests that the media do not contribute to a polarization of the political debate.

Both findings have important implications for party competition and electoral campaigning. First, parties that try to gain ownership of issues should focus on emphasizing issues instead of thinking too much about issue positioning. Putting more emphasis on an issue is the only strategy found here to matter for how parties can increase the number of party–issue linkages. The finding are in line with the claim that party competition develops from an ideology-based competition to an issue-based competition where the question of salience and ownership matter more than positions (Green-Pedersen, 2007). Second, the use of electoral programs to measure party positions and issue emphasis strategies has been criticized recently (Dalton and McAllister, 2014). Moreover, positional changes in electoral programs have no or only a small impact on voter's perceptions of policy shifts by

parties (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2011; Fernandez-Vazquez, 2014). The fact that parties' issue emphasis can explain how mass media link issues to parties validates an important assumption made by many scholars dealing with manifesto data, namely that their content is transmitted to voters. The argument that no one reads these documents can be countered with the finding that issue emphases are reflected in election news coverage. Reading these documents is therefore not necessary to get information on parties' issue strategies. This chapter focused solely on the question of which parties gain voice when mass media debate an issue. There are many other aspects of election news coverage which might be influenced by parties' issue strategies such as the reported issue position or the intra-party homogeneity of such a position. The task of future research will be to identify whether and how these other aspects of election news coverage are affected by parties issue strategies.

Chapter 6

Stated, Reported and Perceived Left-Right Positions

6.1 Does Election News Coverage Mediate Party Positions?

Accurate voter perceptions of party positions are a necessary condition for the functioning of political representation (Thomassen, 1994).[1] If voters were not informed about the positions of political parties, their electoral choice would be meaningless and elections could not function as processes to create or sustain political representation. That voters be aware of party positions is probably the most stringent requirement in the responsible party model (Thomassen, 1994). This requirement is even more demanding when taking into account shifts in party policy, as voters must regularly update their perceived positions in order to keep track of parties' changing positions. If voters did not update their perceived positions of parties (also called party images), and a party shifted away from them, they would risk voting for a party that no longer represented their interests. Further to this, if voters did not update their perceptions a crucial assumption of the spatial theory of party competition would be violated. Spatial theory suggests that a party's policy shift creates a dissonance between a voter's supported party and his own policy beliefs. As a reaction to this dissonance, voters may maintain their party support, change their own beliefs and adopt the position of their supported party, *or* decide to switch to another party and

[1] Earlier versions of this chapter were presented at the Research Working Group of Party Competition at Humboldt University Berlin (2015), the General Conference of the European Political Science Conference in Vienna (2015), the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Conference (2015) in San Francisco and the research colloquium on empirical communication research at the Free University Berlin (2015).

preserve their own beliefs (Adams, Ezrow, and Leiter, 2012). These two consequences of party policy shifts can only occur if voters regularly update their perceptions of party positions. If policy shifts were not perceived by voters, policy persuasion and partisan switching would not occur, and competition between parties would be tenacious or even absent.

Past research has produced a mixed picture in relation to the question of what causes voters to update their perception of party positions. Policy shifts, measured mostly on an ideological left-right dimension, as stated in electoral programs have been found to have no (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2011) or little impact (Meyer, 2013; Fernandez-Vazquez, 2014) on voters' party images. Recent research suggests that voters make use of a wider information environment when updating their perceived positions of parties, consulting similar sources of information as political experts (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2014). Despite the mass media's central role in informing citizens about all kinds of political matters, research on the updating of party positions by voters has mostly disregarded media coverage. This chapter seeks to address this shortcoming by analyzing how election news coverage influences voters' updating of party positions.

This chapter argues that the mass media serves as the missing link between the party policy shifts evident in electoral programs and voters perception of party positions, and that that can explain why some policy shifts are perceived while others are ignored. This claim is assessed by combining and analyzing data based on electoral programs from the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2015b), press coverage during electoral campaigns (Kriesi et al., 2012a), and post-election surveys in Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, from fifteen elections in the 1990s and 2000s. The empirical analysis suggests that election news coverage by tabloid newspapers serves as a mediator of parties' policy shifts. The special role of tabloid newspapers can be explained by two findings: firstly, that tabloid newspapers disseminate parties' positions more quickly than other sectors of the media. While reported party positions in the broadsheet press tend to reveal parties' long-term evolutions, tabloid coverage adequately reflects parties' latest policy positions. Secondly, that parties' reported positions in tabloid newspapers have an effect on voters' images of parties, whilst reported positions in broadsheet newspapers have little to no effect. However, tabloid newspapers only serve as a mediator if a party is sufficiently visible in media coverage. The empirical results suggest that mass media are indeed the "missing link" to understand voters' party images and their relation to parties' left-right positions stated in electoral programs.

The structure of the paper is the following: First, I briefly summarize the body of literature on the perception of policy positions and shifts. Next, I illustrate the role of mass media and election news coverage as a source of information on party positions. In the subsequent section I describe the datasets used for the empirical analysis, the operationalization of the

concepts and the model. After that, I report the results of the empirical analysis and interpret the findings. I conclude with a brief summary and a discussion of implications of the findings as well as potential directions of future research.

6.2 The Role and Causes of Voters' Perceived Party Positions

The spatial approach to party competition and voting behavior (Downs, 1957) assumes that parties compete for voters by offering different policy alternatives for social issues and problems. These policy alternatives can be thought of as positions in a political space. The larger the difference between policy alternatives offered by different political parties, the more distant their positions in the policy dimension. Similarly, voters position themselves in these dimensions according to their preferences, and compare their own positions with the parties' positions. Party positions in different dimensions are expected to correlate, so a single left-right dimension suffices to describe party positions.

In a dynamic setting where parties and voters react to each others actions, a party's most important strategic tool is a change in their left-right position. Supporters of a party may react in two different ways to such changes: to avoid cognitive dissonance, they can either adopt the position of the supported party, or they may switch their partisan alignment and stick to their policy beliefs. Both kind of citizens' reactions can be termed *partisan sorting* (Adams, Ezrow, and Leiter, 2012; Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2014; Carmines, 1989). However, partisan sorting can only happen if voters update their perceived party position. Updating a perceived position can be split into two separate processes . First, voters have to receive information about a shift. Second, they have to accept this shift as a credible move by a party (see Zaller, 1992 for a general model on how individuals respond to political information and Meyer 2013 for its adaptation to party policy shifts).

Consequently, researchers deal with the question of what causes voters to update their perceptions of party positions. What information do they take into account when updating their left-right image of a party? A study by Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu (2011) presents puzzling evidence about voters' updating of party positions. Adams et al. analyzed the effects of policy shifts in electoral programs on voters' perceptions and attitudes in five Western European countries. A comparison of shifts in electoral programs between adjacent elections and shifts in mean voter party placements did not produce any significant or substantial effect: when parties shift their platforms in one direction, voters do not adapt their perceived position of the party in the same way. Moreover, left-right shifts in electoral programs

do not account for any partisan sorting. These findings are surprising, as data based on electoral programs is used heavily in party research to measure policy shifts over time to predict electoral success, party movements, etc. (Adams, 2012).

Fernandez-Vazquez (2014) challenges this finding and provides empirical evidence for a link between parties' policy positions and voters' party images. He argues that the strong continuity of perceived party positions inhibits the identification of an effect in the design and modeling strategy used by Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu (2011). Instead of explaining voters' perceived shifts with party policy shifts, he models a party's perceived position as the weighted mean of the lagged perceived position and the position in the election program. Unlike Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu (2011), Fernandez-Vazquez (2014) finds a small but significant effect of current policy programs on voter party placements, controlling for the lagged perceived position by modeling the party image as a bayesian updating process. He argues that voters do in fact consider positions stated in electoral manifestos and diffused in the electoral campaign, although they place much more weight on their prior perceived position than on the position communicated by a party. This is in line with the results of Dalton and McAllister (2014) who find a high continuity of perceived positions. In a study that combines manifesto data with various panel studies in Great Britain, Meyer (2013) comes to similar conclusions. He finds that around two thirds of party policy shifts are unnoticed by voters. Even well known shifts, such as that of British Labour under Tony Blair in 1997, are unnoticed by one third of all voters. In a subsequent study, Fernandez-Vazquez and Somer-Topcu (2014) show that a change in party leadership moderates the effect of the manifesto's position on the perceived position. They argue that only new leaders are able to shift the perception of voters (for a very similar argument and data see Meyer 2013).

As a follow-up to the 2011 article, Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu (2014) find that voters' perceived shifts (on the issue of European integration) follow the shifts perceived by political experts. Moreover, expert placements of parties on the left-right dimension is correlated with partisan sorting for niche parties (Adams, Ezrow, and Leiter, 2012). These findings suggest that voters weigh similar information as political experts when updating their perception of party positions. Experts are expected to take different sources into account to evaluate positions of political parties. This could include campaign material, electoral programs, legislative behavior and media coverage, among other things. However, knowing that citizens make use of a wide information environment (one similar to the one used by experts) does not tell us which source of information voters really use: since we know little about how experts weigh different sources of information, we know little about how voters do.

The works previously discussed do not completely disregard the role

of media. Fernandez-Vazquez and Somer-Topcu (2014)–and similar Meyer (2013)–argue that a party leader change increases journalists' attention and a party's visibility in media coverage, and therefore the capacity of a party to shape voters' images of parties. Similarly, one can also expect political experts to consider media coverage when they evaluate party positions. However, no research in this area has empirically measured the role of media coverage on voters updating of party images.

This research gap is particularly relevant because media coverage is very often *assumed* to transmit parties' policy shifts stated in programs to voters. In very early research on manifestos, Robertson wrote on manifestos:

> "Though it is perhaps unlikely that many voters read them themselves, they are the source and official backing for any impression that the electorate may get of what the parties stand for. One has to take them seriously because they are the background for any mass media discussion of party policy [...]" (Robertson, 1976)

Today, many researchers working with manifesto data still adhere to this assumption. Also Adams et al. (2011) based their original expectation (for which they found no empirical support) of an effect of shifts in manifestos on shifts in party images on the assumption that media coverage would transmit the content of electoral programs to voters:

> "Thus, while only a fraction of rank-and-file voters presumably read the parties' election manifestos, we might expect citizens to be especially attentive to media coverage of these manifestos because they are published near the time of national elections." (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2011, p.371)

6.3 Election News Coverage as the Missing Link

Media coverage can only serve as a mediator of party policy shifts evident in manifestos if two conditions are fulfilled: firstly, that media coverage on parties reflects parties' policy positions stated in their programs. Secondly, that voters use reported positions of parties from media coverage to update their perceptions of party images.

In the following I will outline what we know so far about these two conditions from existing research and formulate hypotheses about these conditions. From the interviews with party campaign managers conducted by Adams et al. (2011) we know that parties consider electoral programs as central and as defining the main issues of the whole electoral campaign. What campaign managers express might be wishful thinking, but there is indeed some empirical evidence that parties really do try to convey the program's message. From comparisons of parties' press releases with electoral

programs conducted by Norris et al. (Norris et al., 1999, p. 65), we know that press releases during the electoral campaign reflect the core issues of parties' electoral programs. Parties to a great extent try to get the issues emphasized in their program onto the media agenda. The relationships between political parties and media are usually complex and of mutual exchange. However, in times of electoral campaigns, political parties are said to dominate these relationships, in particular in terms of agenda setting (Walgrave and van Aelst, 2006). Because mass media increase the amount of coverage of political affairs, media gates are widen open for political parties during the electoral campaign. Indeed, party–issue associations in media coverage correspond quite well with parties' issue emphasis in press releases (Brandenburg, 2006). This also holds for parties' issue emphasis in electoral programs and party–issue linkages in election news coverage. When discussing an issue, the mass media gives voices to parties that emphasize the issue to a greater degree than their competitors (see chapter 5).

The media can link parties with issues and give them certain stances on these issues. In this sense, the media can portray a party as left-wing and connect it with left-wing issues or positions, or portray it as right-wing and connect the party with right-wing issues or positions. A study by Helbling and Tresch (Helbling and Tresch, 2011) testing correlations between *reported positions* and positions in electoral programs found evidence of such an association; however the study is limited to the issue of European integration. In line with their results, I expect that parties' left-right positions in media coverage reflect party positions from electoral programs.

Manifesto–Media Hypothesis: *Reported party positions in election news coverage reflect party positions in electoral programs.*

Mass media are the central source of information for most citizens for all kinds of political matters. Although some scholars have identified (some types of media) as a danger to democracy (Putnam, 2000), there is ample evidence that (at least some types and formats of) mass media can be informative, increasing citizens' knowledge of political affairs (Fraile and Iyengar, 2014; Soroka et al., 2013; Barabas and Jerit, 2009). The degree of an individual's political knowledge, especially the knowledge of party positions, can be explained by their consumption of mass media (Hofstetter and Strand, 1983; Jenssen, Aalberg, and Aarts, 2012). In particular, exposure to public service broadcasting (Soroka et al., 2013) and quality newspapers (Jenssen, Aalberg, and Aarts, 2012) is linked to higher levels of political knowledge and parties' positions. However, even if these studies suggest that citizens use information from the media, they tell us little about which information they use. The studies lack a measurement of reported party positions in media coverage, which would allow tracking the effect of media content on the perception of the perceived left-right positions of parties. Moreover, existing studies have looked mostly at the absolute knowledge of party positions, and

not at which information citizens use when they *update* their perceptions of party positions.

In line with Fernandez-Vazquez (2014), I assume that voters' perception of party positions should be conceptualized as an updating process. Most voters have a basic understanding of left and right and are able to locate themselves and established parties on a left-right spectrum (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990). Even before an electoral campaign they have beliefs about parties' positions. During the electoral campaign they update these beliefs based on new information. Their perceived position can then be measured as a weighted average of the prior perceived position and the newly received information (Fernandez-Vazquez, 2014). I expect that voters update their perceived positions of parties using reported party positions from media coverage. So, if a party is portrayed as more left-wing (or right-wing) than voters perceived before the electoral campaign, voters will update their perception of the party to the left (or right).

Media Information Hypothesis: *Voters update their perceptions of party positions using reported party positions from election news coverage.*

As a caveat however, the media does not treat all parties equally. In particular, the amount of media coverage involving a specific party differs largely between parties and elections. Large parties and parties in government are more visible in media coverage than small opposition parties. The different visibility of parties in media coverage reflects the power structures of the political system (Hopmann, de Vreese, and Albaek, 2011). Consequently, the amount of information on party's positions that is distributed by mass media varies greatly between parties. A party's visibility in media coverage is found to be influential in citizens' electoral choice (Hopmann et al., 2010b; Vliegenthart, Boomgaarden, and Van Spanje, 2012) and the knowledge of parties' positions. Banducci, Giebler, and Kritzinger (2015) found that the more visible a party in election news coverage, the more likely citizens will know the party's position. However, their cross-sectional design did not account for citizens' prior knowledge of party positions. Given this and the logic of the updating process, I expect that voters only update their perceived position using reported party positions if the party is highly visible in media coverage. If voters receive little or no new information about a party's position, they will stick to their prior beliefs about that party's position.

Party Visibility Moderation Hypothesis: *The effect of reported party positions on voters' party images is conditional on a party's visibility in election news coverage.*

6.4 Design, Data & Methodology

Data

In order to test these hypotheses, three different types of data are merged into a combined dataset: Content analytical data of electoral programs from the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2015b), data on election news coverage generated by the project "National political change in a globalizing world" (Kriesi et al., 2012a), and post election survey data from various national election studies, (mainly) provided by the European Voter Database and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. In the following paragraphs I describe the three different data sources, and the measurement of comparable left-right positions for all of them.

Firstly, I make use of voter surveys conducted by national election studies to measure voters' perceptions of party positions and policy shifts. In these post-election surveys, respondents were asked to place the most relevant political parties on a left-right scale, answering a question such as:

> "In politics, people sometimes talk of left and right. Using the scale from 0 to 10, where would you place [Party X?]" [2]

Secondly, to measure reported party positions and party visibility in media coverage I use content analytical data based on election news coverage generated by the project "National political change in a globalizing world" (Kriesi et al., 2012a). This dataset covers the election news coverage in six countries (Austria, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK) for four to five national elections in the 1990s/2000s. The Kriesi et al. dataset contains information on election news coverage from two press outlets on each election, for the last two months of the electoral campaign. Their approach involved coding the most relevant tabloid and quality newspaper in each country. These were Bild and Süddeutsche Zeitung in Germany, Sun and Times in the UK, Blick and Neue Zürcher Zeitung in Switzerland and NRC Handelsblad and Algemeen Dagblad in the Netherlands.[3] The sample consists of articles related to national political parties or the upcoming elections. The analyzed text segments include the title, the lead and the first paragraph (for broadsheets) and the whole article (for tabloids). The

[2] This is the question from the British Election Study of 2001. The wording in the other national election surveys are very similar.

[3] Kriesi et al. decided to code the Algemeen Dagblad with the argument "that there is no genuine tabloid newspaper in the Netherlands", referring to a content analysis done by Koopmans (2007) making the same argument. Interestingly, Koopman then decided to code De Telegraaf because he considered it the most tabloid-like newspaper, whereas Kriesi et al. decided to collect data from the Algemeen Dagblad. However, even if the Algemeen Dagblad is not a tabloid (in the sense of Bild or The Sun), according to an expert survey (http://www.mediasystemsineurope.org/), it is certainly more tabloid-like than the NRC Handelsblad.

coding units are core sentences (Kleinnijenhuis and Pennings, 2001). A core sentence contains three elements: a subject (an actor, in this case a party), an object (in this case a political issue) and a direction (-1, 0, 1). The direction reflects the stance on an issue (negative or positive). If a sentence in an article reads something like "The SPD supports the introduction of a minimum wage", this would be coded as: SPD – minimum wage – +1. This data structure goes beyond most of the usual topic or actor coding in other media content analytical studies as it establishs a relation between an actor and an issue. The issues were coded open-ended by the coders and later aggregated to 84 issue categories by Kriesi and colleagues.

Lastly, I use content analytical data of electoral programs provided by the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2014b). This data is available for more than 50 countries dating from 1945 or the first democratic election, and for all parties that are represented in parliament. The measurement of party left-right scores from manifesto data has provoked some controversy and debate. Different concerns about the scores have been suggested (Laver and Budge, 1992; Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006; König, Marbach, and Osnabrügge, 2013; Elff, 2013), which follow different methodological approaches and make different assumptions about the role and meaning of electoral programs, the structure and dynamics of party competition and the concepts of left and right. The most common issue concerns the rile - an indicator that subtracts the share of statements considered as left from the share of statements considered as right. The validity of the rile has been criticized by some (Jahn, 2011; Lowe et al., 2011) and partially justified or defended by others (Volkens et al., 2013; Mölder, 2016).

All three data sources cover the most important political parties in the countries being considered. The factor that limits the sample of countries and elections the greatest is the media dataset, which covers only six countries (Austria, Germany, France, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK). Additionally, Austria and France have to be dropped: Austrian post-election surveys from national election studies did not ask respondents to place the parties on a left-right scale for the elections covered by the media dataset. France is not in the sample because the media dataset covers presidential elections, whereas manifesto data cover parliamentary elections. The sample thus consists of four countries, 15 elections and 20 parties (see C.1 in the appendix for an overview of cases). This rather small number of countries obviously limits the ability to generalize the findings. However, the countries have quite diverse political systems, and include consociational and majoritarian systems, concentrated and fragmented party systems, proportional and first-past-the-post electoral systems, as well as having liberal and democratic-corporatist media systems (Hallin and Mancini, 2004).

Operationalization

In line with prior research (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2011; Fernandez-Vazquez, 2014) the main dependent variable – the perceived party positions – is calculated as the mean perceived position of a focal party over all respondents, and is calculated for each party at each election.[4] I scale these positions so that the interval of results from the survey questions (in most cases [0, 10]) becomes [-1, 1], where a positive number indicates a right-wing position and a negative number indicates a left-wing position.[5] What voters have in mind when they think about left and right may vary between countries. To account for this, it is necessary to construct country variant measures of left right positions in media coverage and electoral programs.

To arrive at comparable left-right positions from press coverage, electoral programs and election surveys , I proceed in the following way: Firstly, I map 84 negative and 84 positive categories of the issue scheme of the Kriesi et al. data to the 56 categories of the manifesto coding scheme (see table C.4 in the supplementary material for an overview of the manifesto category scheme and for the mapping scheme). Then I aggregate the recoded party–issue core sentence data to party-election-issue combinations for tabloid and broadsheet outlets separately. The result is two datasets (one for tabloid coverage and one for broadsheet coverage), in the same format as the manifesto dataset but based on media coverage. Secondly, I calculate left-right positions using the following formula:

$$p = \frac{R - L}{R + L + C} \tag{6.1}$$

in which p indicates the reported left-right position of a party, R is the sum of the mentions of a party with right-wing positions, L is the sum of mentions of a party with left-wing positions and C is the sum of mentions of non-ideological issues.[6] I use the classification of left, right and consensual issues provided by Franzmann and Kaiser (2006).[7]

[4] In the case that the survey data provided design or sampling weights, I use them to account for systematic oversampling of certain subpopulations or regions.

[5] To scale from the interval [0,10] to [-1,1], the following formula is applied: new score = (old score - 5)/5

[6] In contrast to the previous chapter, the denominator here includes the neutral categories (compare to equation 5.1 in section 5.4). This means that the overall salience of the left and right categories relative to the neutral categories influences the scores: The more the party addresses issues not related to left and right, the more centrist the score. On the left-right dimension this seems very plausible and is the way the standard left-right measure is constructed (rile) because parties that avoid to talk about left and right issues can't have extreme left or right positions. While this seems plausible for the left-right dimension it must not apply for issue positions where parties can have an extreme issue stance but de-emphasize an issue.

[7] I thank Simon Franzmann for providing me with the most up-to-date version of these "issue structures". The Franzmann & Kaiser procedure also accounts for changes of the

They have developed a method to calculate left-right estimates taking into account differences in the meaning of left and right between countries, by defining left and right categories for each country separately. This is in contrast to the logic of other indicators, for example the rile, which assumes that left and right categories are the same over time and across countries. As surveys are asked in a specific context, estimates accounting for different meanings of left-right seem more appropriate than a measure which assumes that survey respondents in all four countries have the same understanding of left and right.[8] I drop cases where the number of core-sentences is so small (<10) that the calculation of a reliable reported left-right position is not possible. As a third step, I calculate equivalent left-right positions with manifesto data using the same formula and the same classification of left, right and consensual issues.

The similarity of left-right positions from party platforms, reported in news coverage and perceived by voters are illustrated in figure 6.1. The figure also illustrates that there is high correlation between the left-right positions from different sources, underlying the validity of the suggested measurements. All left-right positions are on a common scale with the theoretical minimum and maximum of -1 and 1. Their similar empirical distributions and their theoretical construction justify the comparability of these scales.

Table 6.1: Summary statistics

Variable	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min.**	**Max.**	**N**
party image	-0.05	0.36	-0.75	0.62	75
platform position	-0.1	0.28	-0.62	0.54	75
reported pos. tabloid	-0.1	0.35	-0.9	0.70	69
reported pos. quality	-0.1	0.32	-0.83	0.69	74
party visibility tabl. (raw scores)	57.41	49.21	3	296	69
party visibility qual. (raw scores)	74.51	64.8	2	297	74

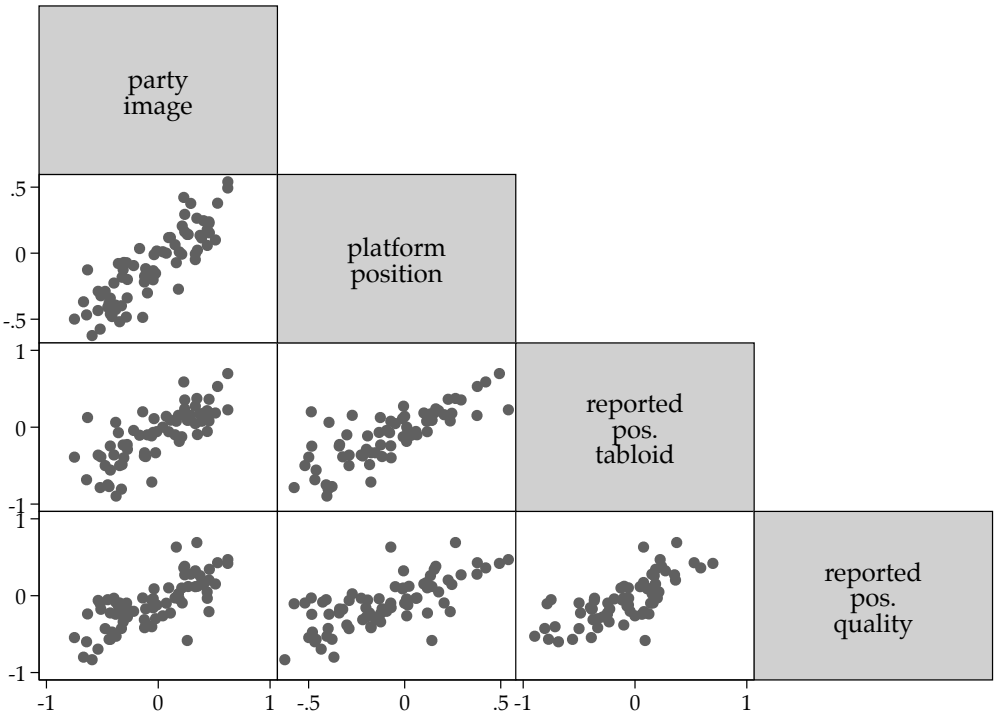
A party's visibility in media coverage is measured as the number of mentions of a party with issues considered as left or right. The log of this number is taken to account for the decreasing marginal information effects. Furthermore, it is centered to facilitate the interpretation of interaction effects.

Most of the survey data available from the national election studies does not contain questions on individual media exposure. The aggregate analysis conducted here looks at effects of the media information environment, rather

left-right issue structures over time. However, as the period under study here is rather short I do not assume a dynamic issue structure and use a static issue structure for each country. Table C.3 in the appendix provides an overview of the issue classification.

[8]The Franzmann & Kaiser approach to calculate left-right estimates does include several other steps, e.g. a smoothing procedure. However, these have underlying assumptions which do not fit my research question.

Figure 6.1: Associations between perceived positions, platform positions and reported positions



than that of individual media consumption.

I use linear regression models with party-clustered standard errors to account for the clustered nature of the data. The slightly differing number of observations between models is due to the lack of lagged observations for some cases and the slightly different number of missing cases between tabloid and broadsheet newspapers. Models are calculated separately for tabloid and broadsheet newspapers due to multicollinearity. Table 6.1 provides summary statistics for all variables used in the models.

6.5 Empirical Analysis

Results

Table 6.2 illustrates the regression results for the effect of platform positions on reported party positions. The dependent variables for models 1 to 4 in table 6.2 are the reported party positions in tabloid newspapers (models 1 and 2) and quality newspapers (models 3 and 4). Models 1 and 3 include only the lagged dependent variable and indicate how stable reported party positions are over time. The high r^2 value for model 3 when compared to model 1 indicates that these positions are more stable in broadsheet newspaper than reported positions in tabloid newspapers. Models 2 and 4 also include the platform position as an independent variable. In both models the effect of the platform position is significant and quite strong indicating that platform positions can explain large amounts of variance in reported positions. One can see that the influence of the platform position on reported positions is larger for positions in tabloid newspapers than for positions in quality newspapers. Not only are platform and reported positions correlated, but platform positions can also explain variation in current reported positions controlling for the lagged reported positions. Moreover, reported positions are not very stable and tabloid newspapers are more influenced by party platforms than positions in broadsheet newspapers. These results lends evidence to the affirmation of hypothesis 1.

Tables 6.3 and 6.4 show the results of the analysis of perceived party positions. Table 6.3 is based on reported positions from tabloid newspapers and table 6.4 shows the equivalent with reported positions from quality newspapers. The first column in table 6.3 and table 6.4 is a replication of the model by Fernandez-Vazquez (2014). The perceived image is modeled as a weighted average of the lagged perceived position and the current platform position. Results are very similar to the ones reported by Fernandez-Vazquez. The lagged perceived position has a strong effect on the current perceived position, indicating a high stability in perception. The platform position has a small, but significant effect on the perceived position. Both coefficients sum up to approximately 1, indicating that the interpretation

Table 6.2: Determinants of reported left-right positions of political parties in press coverage

	(1) Tabloids	(2) Tabloids	(3) Broadsheet	(4) Broadsheet
reported pos. (t-1)	0.551**	0.0972	0.582***	0.245+
	(0.160)	(0.101)	(0.129)	(0.122)
platform position		1.002***		0.655***
		(0.113)		(0.089)
Constant	-0.0482	-0.0286	-0.0284	-0.0073
	(0.051)	(0.023)	(0.039)	(0.021)
N	60	60	65	65
Adj. R^2	0.321	0.659	0.392	0.557

+ p <0.1; ** p <.01; *** p <.001. Party-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

suggested by Fernandez-Vazquez – that these coefficients can be considered as weights assigned to the different sources of information – is plausible.

In model 2, the reported party position is added as an independent variable to explain the perceived party position. For both tabloid and broadsheet newspapers the reported position indicates a coefficient near zero with standard errors higher than the coefficient. The effect of the platform position remains significant and of a similar size to model 1. These preliminary results suggest that voters do not (in general) weigh reported positions to update their perceived party positions. However, these models do not take the different levels of party visibility into account and assume the same effect of reported party positions on perceived positions for all parties.

Model 3 includes an interaction term representing the effect of the party's visibility with the reported party position, and another interaction term representing the effect of a party's visibility with the lagged perceived image (party image (t-1)). A positive interaction between a party visibility and reported party position would indicate that the reported party position is only used by voters to update their perceived image in the case that a party is sufficiently visible in news coverage (Hypothesis 3). I expect a negative effect for the interaction between party visibility and the party image (t-1) because voters will rely less on their prior knowledge if more information is available. Results for reported positions of tabloid and broadsheet newspapers differ. For tabloid newspapers, both interaction terms are as expected (the former positive, the latter negative). In contrast, neither of the interaction terms are significant for the model involving reported positions from broadsheet newspapers.

Figure 6.2 and 6.3 show the marginal effects of the reported position and the lagged perceived position on the current perceived position for different levels of visibility in media coverage. One can see that the effect of the re-

Table 6.3: The effect of reported positions in tabloid newspapers on voters' perceived left-right positions of parties

	(1) party image	(2) party image	(3) party image
party image (t-1)	0.791***	0.788***	0.773***
	(0.054)	(0.068)	(0.045)
platform position	0.234*	0.261**	0.150
	(0.093)	(0.082)	(0.098)
reported position		-0.0363	0.0705
		(0.063)	(0.058)
party visibility			0.0296**
			(0.009)
party visibility × rep. position			0.138**
			(0.044)
party vis. × party image (t-1)			-0.0854*
			(0.033)
Constant	0.0245+	0.0258+	0.0263+
	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.013)
N	64	59	59
Adj. R^2	0.948	0.946	0.953

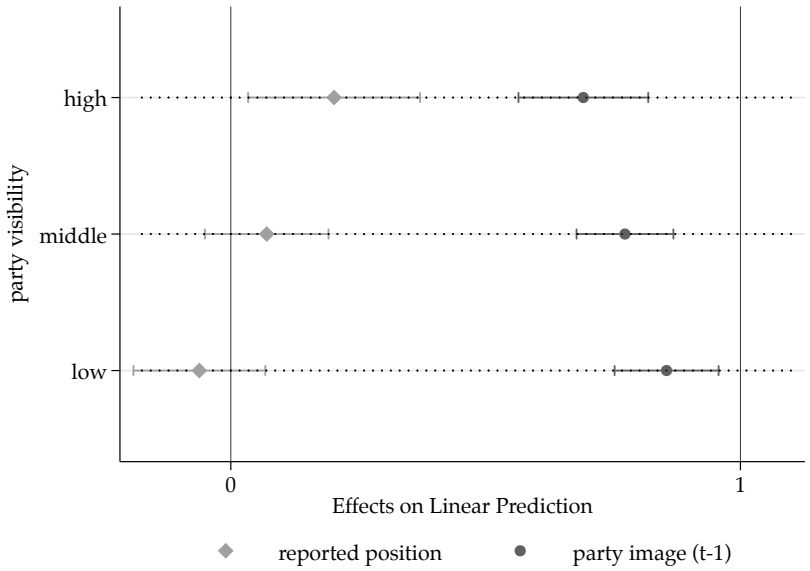
* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001. Party-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

Table 6.4: The effect of reported positions in broadsheet newspapers on voters' perceived left-right positions of parties

	(1) party image	(2) party image	(3) party image
party image (t-1)	0.791***	0.763***	0.771***
	(0.054)	(0.062)	(0.057)
platform position	0.234*	0.210*	0.178
	(0.093)	(0.099)	(0.108)
reported pos.		0.0714	0.0712
		(0.057)	(0.051)
party visibility			0.0186
			(0.015)
party visibility × rep. position			0.0442
			(0.079)
party vis. × party image (t-1)			-0.0581
			(0.051)
Constant	0.0245+	0.0300*	0.0282+
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.016)
N	64	63	63
Adj. R^2	0.948	0.951	0.951

* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001. Party-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

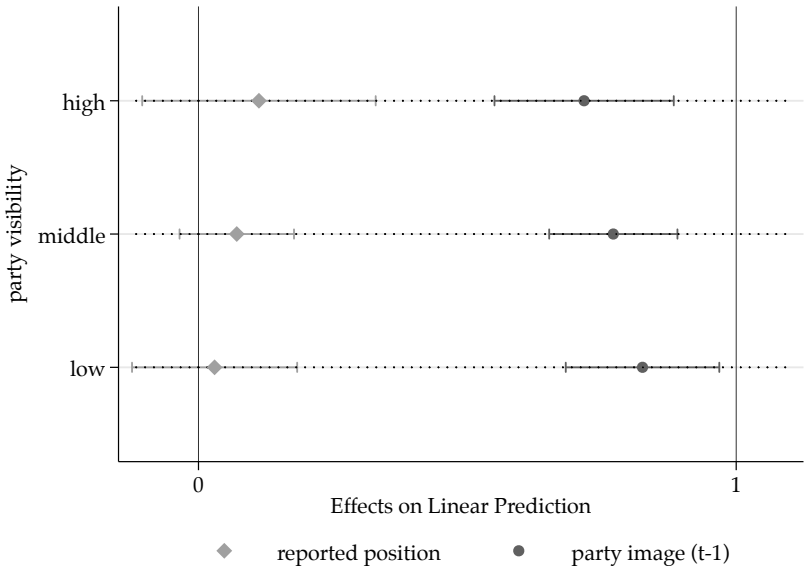
Figure 6.2: Marginal Effects of lagged party image and reported party positions on perceived party positions at varying levels of party visibility in tabloid newspapers



ported positions on the perceived party position increases with higher levels of party visibility. This can be observed for tabloid and quality newspapers. However, the effect of party visibility on the reported position only reaches statistical significance for tabloid newspapers. Similarly, increasing party visibility reduces the effect of the lagged perceived position on the current perceived position, indicating that more available information leads to more updating.

In an additional analysis I test whether election news coverage transmits party positions to voters by testing for mediation. Table 6.5 shows the results for the indirect mediated effect. The scores indicate the indirect effects of the platform position on the perceived position. Indirect effects in mediation are calculated as the product of the coefficient of the independent variable (platform position) on the mediator (reported position) and the effect of the mediator (reported position) on the dependent variable (perceived position) (Baron and Kenny, 1986). As the moderator (party visibility) changes the effect of the mediator (reported position) on the dependent variable (perceived position) the whole mediation is conditional on the moderator. The results indicate moderated mediation for tabloid newspaper and no mediation for broadsheet newspapers. Press coverage of tabloid newspapers serves as mediator of platform positions at high levels of party visibility. This finding is underlined by the relative absence of a direct effect of the platform on

Figure 6.3: Marginal Effects of lagged party image and reported party positions on perceived party positions at varying levels of party visibility in broadsheet newspapers



the perceived position in model 3, when compared to models 1 and 2 (table 6.3).

The different effects of broadsheet and tabloid newspapers is due to two factors: Firstly, that the effect of positions from electoral programs on reported positions in media coverage is less pronounced for broadsheets than for tabloid newspapers. Tabloid newspapers follow more closely the changes in positions of parties than broadsheet newspapers. Positions in broadsheet newspapers are more stable because they weigh party's past position stronger than the current position. Broadsheet newspapers are said to provide a more nuanced picture of politics than tabloid newspapers. This might also mean that broadsheet newspaper might evaluate a party with an emphasis on its history and past actions, and thereby discount some of the parties' current strategic shifts. Recall that parties' positions stated in electoral programs are strategic positions often chosen by parties to reach vote and office-seeking goals. Whereas broadsheet newspapers might discount such strategies, tabloid newspaper with their tendency to scandalize and overreact might be more prone to such strategy and rhetoric and thereby more closely reflect a party's strategy.

Secondly, reported party positions in tabloid newspapers have a larger effect on perceived positions than broadsheet newspapers. This might be due to the larger audience reached by tabloid newspapers compared to broad-

Table 6.5: Indirect (mediated) effect of platform positions on voters' perceived left-right positions of parties at different levels of media visibility

	Tabloids	Broadsheets
mean - 1 * sd	-0.0618	0.0196
	(0.071)	(0.050)
mean	0.0707	0.0466
	(0.075)	(0.044)
mean + 1 * sd	0.203^{+}	0.0736
	(0.113)	(0.084)
N	59	63

+ p <.1; Bootstrapped standard errors in parentheses (Hayes, 2009).

sheet newspapers. The typical tabloid newspapers in the sample (Bild, The Sun and Blick) reach a much larger audience than their broadsheet counterparts. Moreover, readers of quality and broadsheet newspaper might differ in how they process information and in their stability of prior beliefs. In general, readers of broadsheet newspapers are considered to be more educated and more politically involved. Although they might consume more information, their political beliefs might be more stable than those of tabloid readers.

Robustness

The results hold to several robustness checks. These checks focus on model 3 in tables 6.3 and 6.4 as it is the central model looking at whether or not voters use reported party positions.

Firstly, a jackknife test excluding countries one by one checks whether the results are skewed by a single country indicates that the results hold in a replication of model 3 (from tables 6.3 and 6.4). Reported positions in tabloid newspapers do in fact influence perceived party positions at high levels of party visibility (table C.5 in the appendix), whilst reported positions from broadsheet newspaper do not (table C.5 in the appendix).

Moreover, replicating using the modeling strategy applied by Adams et al. (2011) produces similar results to the one presented above. Their design differs by two aspects: firstly, Adams et al. use the rile indicator instead of a country-specific left-right measure. Secondly, they use a first difference design, trying to explain changes in perceived positions with changes in platform positions. Table C.7 in the appendix shows the results for such a modeling strategy. Shifts in reported party positions cannot be explained by shifts in platform positions (neither for tabloids nor for broadsheets). This is probably the case because variation over time in reported positions is much higher than in platform positions. However, model 3 shows a similar effect in

regard to the perception of positional shifts. At high levels of visibility, shifts in reported party positions have a significant effect on shifts in perceived positions, indicated by the interaction term representing the effect of party visibility on the reported position. This effect is significant for both tabloid and broadsheet newspapers, but more pronounced for tabloid newspapers, confirming the results of the analysis above.

In a similar way to Adams et al. 2011, I test whether the results hold when looking at party placements of a focal party's supporters only (table C.8 and C.9 in the appendix). Interestingly, the effects disappear. Even the main effect of a party's platform on the perceived position is not significant. Instead, the effect of the lagged party image has a slightly bigger effect on the current perceived position. This suggests that the perceived positions of party supporters are more stable than the average perceived positions. This is plausible as party supporters have stronger beliefs about the positions of their supported party and therefore are less likely to use new information to update their beliefs about their supported party's position. It may be possible that updating a position of a supported party might produce inconsistencies in their belief systems and force them to reconsider their own left-right position, or their party support. Such costly considerations can be avoided if positional changes are ignored.

6.6 Discussion

In this chapter, I have analyzed the effect of election news coverage on voters updating of party positions. The results can be summarized as following: firstly, reported party positions in tabloid and broadsheet newspapers reflect positions in party platforms. Secondly, only reported positions from tabloid newspapers have an effect on perceived party positions. Moreover, this effect is conditional on a party's visibility in tabloid news coverage. Only at high levels of party visibility in election news coverage do voters consider reported party positions to update their perceived positions. Therefore, only tabloid newspapers (as oppose to broadsheet newspapers) serve as a mediator connecting positions from party platforms and voters perceived positions.

These findings are in line with findings of Fernandez-Vazquez (2014) and Fernandez-Vazquez and Somer-Topcu (2014), showing a small effect of party platforms on perceived positions, the latter of which is dependent on other factors. Moreover, the results show that mass media (and in particular tabloid newspapers) are part of the wider information environment used by voters to update their perception of party positions.

The findings have important implications for theories concerning competition between parties, their strategies, and for the role of mass media in democracy. The results imply that the positions of political parties as

stated in electoral manifestos, which form the basis of the campaign, can be influential for voters updating of perceived positions – under certain circumstances. As a party's visibility in press coverage moderates whether voters update their positions in line with positions in electoral programs, visibility in news coverage should be the major aim of political campaigning. Although this does not seem like big news for most scholars and practitioners of campaigning, this chapter has found no evidence in support of a direct effect on the perception of voters by positions stated in electoral programs and diffused during the electoral campaign. Either campaigning of parties with brochures, leaflets, etc. does not have any impact, or the assumption that electoral programs reflect the campaign efforts of parties is wrong.

The results that tabloid newspapers are more important for transmitting positions in party platforms to voters than broadsheet newspapers is, at first, surprising. The share of hard news in broadsheet newspaper is higher than in tabloids, broadsheets are expected to report less biased, more informative and more on policies, while tabloids are expected to scandalize, create distrust in parties, and contribute to a "presidentialization" of representative democracy. However, the different effects can be explained by the better representation of party position in tabloid newspapers, and the larger impact of reported party positions in tabloid newspapers on perceived positions. This finding is in line with the results from a cross-sectional micro analysis, analyzing citizens' knowledge of party positions at the European parliamentary elections (Banducci, Giebler, and Kritzinger, 2015). Banducci et al. similarly find that the content in non-quality outlets reduces the knowledge gap more than the content in quality outlets. This and their study highlight the importance of studying the effects of non-quality media outlets.

The findings of this chapter suggest two main directions for future research to overcome some deficiencies. Firstly, the use of the mean perceived positions of all voters might very likely hide substantial variation between voters. Different levels of media exposure and political interest may cause different voters to update their perceptions very differently. (Meyer, 2013) has done some pioneering work here, but has also mainly ignored the role of media content. The analysis on the micro-level requires panel data, which does not yet exist for cross national comparisons. A issue related to this is the time of measurement. The prior position is measured with the post-election survey of the last election, in many cases three or more years before the electoral campaign begins. Although some research indicates that electoral campaigns are focusing events in which citizens' political attention is higher than in routine times (Andersen, Tilley, and Heath, 2005), there is also evidence that the perception of party positions is also influenced by party behavior after the elections, such as the government formation process and the choice of coalition partners (Fortunato and Stevenson, 2013). The assumption that voters do not update their positions during the legisla-

tive period, but only during the electoral campaign is quite significant and should be tested more closely.

Secondly, the link between positions in party platforms and reported party positions was only very briefly discussed and analyzed here. We still know very little about what determines the level of representation of platform positions in media coverage, and there are some reasons to believe that not all positions are equally well represented by media, for reasons including the partisanship of a media outlet, the agenda setting power of a party, the issue-ownership of a party, or a change in leadership.

These findings contribute to the debate on the different sources of voters' perception of parties, showing that election news coverage can serve as the missing link transmitting party positions from electoral programs to voters.

Conclusion

Chapter 7

Summary and Discussion

The goal of this study was to investigate what I call the mediation assumption: the claim that the content of party's electoral programs is disseminated by election news coverage during the electoral campaign. When approaching representation as a process of authorization where citizens mandate parties, the mediation assumption is an essential step in the process of political representation. Not only that, the mediation assumption is made by many scholars that use data based on electoral programs to justify their choice of data source. In this section, I summarize the results of the study, present the major implications of the findings for various scholarly debates, discuss the study's limitations and drawbacks, and make some suggestions for future research.

7.1 Summary of the Study

The main research question of this study is: does the mass media inform voters about parties' electoral programs during the electoral campaign? There are two answers to this: a concise one and a detailed one.

A concise answer ...

The concise answer is: yes. Overall and in general, the mass media covers the messages of parties' electoral programs during the electoral campaign—though such general and simplified summaries should be taken with care. The results from the empirical chapters suggest the existence of a strong link between manifesto messages and media coverage. In other words, that in many cases it is fair to assume that the most important political ideas in manifestos are covered by the mass media during the electoral campaign. Certainly, in order to understand and interpret this finding correctly, one has to have the concept of the manifesto–media link in mind. According to this, media coverage can reflect parties' messages in three ways: by discussing

similar issues as they appear in electoral programs, by linking parties with the issues that are emphasized by those parties, and by portraying parties as either left or right-wing according to the emphasis on left and right positions in their programs.

... and a detailed answer.

The detailed answer addresses the four subordinate research questions concerning: (1) how the media covers parties' electoral programs, (2) to what extent they do so, (3) when they do so, and (4) whether it has an effect on voters' perception of parties.

This study began with the assumption that political representation is a process of authorization where voters mandate parties (Andeweg and Thomassen, 2005). At elections, parties make a programmatic offer, and citizens evaluate the different offers and choose the one that best fits their own preferences. By voting for the party whose offer best fits their own preferences they supply a mandate to a party to implement the offer when voted into office.

Such a party mandate understanding of political representation only functions under certain conditions (Thomassen, 1994): one being that parties must present distinct programmatic offers. Parties must stick to their programs when elected into office. Voters must know and be able to evaluate the party programs. Focusing on the role of mass media in the process of political representation, one could add the following condition: the mass media must cover parties' manifesto messages, otherwise voters would have no chance to learn about parties' programmatic offers and to evaluate them based on their own preferences. Elections would not translate policy preferences of citizens, but they would deteriorate into meaningless beauty contests. When conceptualizing political representation as a party-mandate, media coverage should cover manifesto messages during the electoral campaign.

(1) How does the media cover parties' manifesto messages?

This study detailed the concept of the manifesto–media link describing how the media covers the content of electoral programs. Media coverage is necessarily selective and limited—the media is not able to disseminate every detail of every single policy proposition from all the manifestos published by all parties that might compete at a given election.

The manifesto–media link describes what cues in manifestos are important and how they are covered by the media.

The concept of the manifesto–media link refers to the coverage of one manifesto in a specific media outlet. Such a conceptualization allows one to study differences in the strength of the manifesto–media link based on party

characteristics, types of media outlets, and country differences. The three conditions of the manifesto–media link refer to three essential elements of the party programmatic offer put forward by theories of party competition. Inspired by the responsible party model, I formulate the manifesto–media link as conditions that need to be fulfilled so that political representation can function properly: The first condition is the congruence between an agenda of an electoral program and the agenda of a media outlet during the electoral campaign. The second condition looks at whether the linkage of issues with parties in media coverage reflects a party's issue emphasis strategy in its manifesto. The third condition is the correspondence of parties portrayal as left or right by the media and parties' left-right positions in electoral programs.

(2) To what extent does the mass media cover parties' manifesto messages?

How strong is the manifesto–media link empirically? The answer to this question uses some of the empirical findings from the empirical chapters: 4, 5, and 6. The agendas put forward in manifestos by parties and in election news coverage by media outlets overlap to a considerable degree. On average, the issues stated in a given manifesto and a media outlet's coverage on issues overlap by a third. These levels of congruence should be considered quite high and indicate initial evidence for the existence of the manifesto–media Link. This is particularly true when considering that the applied methodology (a very detailed issue scheme) and the case under investigation (European parliamentary elections) created a difficult test for agenda congruence detection. Very high levels of congruence are normatively not even desirable, as such an outcome could only be achieved when the parties' manifestos in a focal country a indistinguishable between parties.

The second dimension of the manifesto–media link addresses whether the media links issues with parties that put more emphasis on those issues in their manifesto. One standard deviation change in issue emphasis corresponds to a change in the expected number of party–issue linkages of roughly 15 to 20%. This effect is found for short-term changes in emphasis as well as for long-term differences between parties. Considering that this effect is at work in every party–issue combination in all media outlets, issue emphasis (long- and short-term) systematically influences how the media link issues with parties.

Finally, the media portrays a party as left or right if the party in question puts more emphasis on left or right issues or positions in its manifesto respectively. Left-right positions based on media coverage are correlated with positions based on electoral programs (Pearson's r between 0.7 and 0.8). Current positions in electoral programs are influential for a party's current reported position even if one controls for a party's past reported position. This suggests that media coverage also captures changes in the left-right

positions stated in parties' electoral programs over time.

(3) When does the mass media cover parties' manifesto messages?

The third research question is aimed at the study of variation in the strength of the manifesto–media link. In general one can conclude that there are only a few factors that systematically and consistently influence the strength of the manifesto–media link.

Chapters 4 and 5 addressed the question of whether incumbent parties are more likely to have their programs covered by the mass media, and the empirical results provide little to no support for any incumbency bonus. Whether a party is in government or opposition has no systematic effect on the strength of the manifesto–media link. Additionally, the findings of chapter 4 suggest that there is no partisan bias in the manifesto–media link. Partisan media outlets do not seem to support "their" party by promoting the agenda of its manifesto.

The largest systematic differences can be found when considering the type of media outlet. Quality outlets are more likely to share a common agenda with political parties than the tabloid media is. The picture is slightly different with regard to the portrayal of parties' left-right positions: "non-quality" media are more likely to cover parties' current positions, while quality outlets partially discount a party's current position in favor of its past position. The analysis of party–issue linkages provides only modest support for any systematic differences. If something is to be said, it corroborates the findings on the reported left-right positions—that non-quality outlets consider a party's current issue emphasis more than quality outlets, who discount a party's current issue emphasis in favor of its issue emphasis in the past. So the differences between quality and non-quality media in reporting on electoral programs concerns not only the amount of information, but also the content.

The conclusions that can be drawn in regard to the effect of different systems on the strength of the manifesto–media link are only tentative, as the number of countries in two of the three empirical chapters is very small. The results here suggest that the manifesto–media link is stronger in countries with more fragmented party systems. Parties and media are more likely to share a common agenda in these countries, and the reflection of issue emphasis in party–issue linkages is also slightly more pronounced in more fragmented systems. It is hard to draw any conclusions with regard to the different media systems. The effect of different media systems was studied systematically only in chapter four. The findings provided no support for any systematic differences. In the other chapters, variation with regard to different media systems was too small to even draw any tentative conclusions.

(4) Does the coverage of parties' manifesto messages matter to voters' perception of parties?

The last empirical chapter addressed the fourth research question by studying the impact of reported party positions on perceived party positions. Parties' left-right positions are among the most studied aspects of party competition and electoral behavior. Reported left-right position of parties matter to voters' perception of parties – at least under certain circumstances. The results suggest that whether voters perceive a party's policy shift is conditional on the coverage and visibility of that party in tabloid news. Certainly, this is a strong constraint to the transmission of parties' left-right positions from manifestos to voters. However, in contrast with the very pessimistic views in the current literature (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2011; Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2014), these findings provide a more optimistic view on the mediation of electoral programs.

7.2 Contributions to Scholarly Discussions

The findings of this study contribute to three central scholarly discussions: the discussion on the role of mass media in democracy and representation, the role of information in party competition, and the debate on the audiences and functions of electoral programs.

Democratic Representation and Mass Media

This study contributes to our understanding of political representation and the role of the mass in today's democracies. The empirical analyses do not lend support to the alleged change from a competitive to an audience democracy (Manin, 1997). Voters have access to information on parties' electoral programs, and do not have to rely solely on retrospective evaluations of the performance of the government. In other words, voters are not merely spectators observing the political arena, but can instead vote rationally based on their own preferences and the parties' programs. This study corroborated the mediation assumption, and thereby tested an important missing link in the responsible party model.

The implications for theories involving the mass media are clear. There is no support for the media malaise hypothesis or any other deteriorative effect of media coverage on the functioning of democracy. In contrast, it appears that the mass media is conducive for the functioning of political representation, as fits with the responsible party model. By covering the main messages of parties' electoral programs, the media fulfills its major democratic responsibility. Programmatic differences are reflected by the mass media in terms of a party's spatial position and its emphasis of issues—the two most important aspects of the programmatic profile of a party. The

fact that there is no evidence for a partisan or a structural bias in the manifesto–media link strongly corroborates this claim. While other aspects of media coverage might be driven by partisan considerations or a party's structural advantages—such as incumbency or power—media coverage on manifesto messages is mostly unbiased and non-partisan.

The Role of Information in Party Competition

The findings of this study have implications for our understanding of party competition. Current research on the perception of party positions suggest government composition is a driving factor of party position perceptions (Fortunato and Stevenson, 2013; Fortunato and Adams, 2015; Spoon and Klüver, 2017), and parties' capacities to strategically influence their own perception (beyond forming a government) were considered very limited. Research on whether changes in manifestos are perceived by voters has produced only weak or no evidence (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2011; Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2014), though these findings have previously been at least partially called into question (Fernandez-Vazquez, 2014). Nevertheless, this study may indicate that media coverage is an important mediator and conditioning factor in the perception of party positions (see also Banducci, Giebler, and Kritzinger, 2015). Given the right circumstances, manifesto messages are disseminated by media coverage and can be influential for perceived party positions. The finding that media coverage does reflect manifesto messages, and that those messages are perceived under certain circumstances by voters, confirms the basic assumption of all studies using vote-seeking arguments to explain why parties change their programs.

Furthermore, while existing research has raised doubt about whether the issue emphasis in media coverage reflects that in manifestos (Helbling and Tresch, 2011), this study finds a strong association between the two. This indicates that the left-right positions *and* issue emphasis in manifestos are effectively communicated to voters, and are influential for a party's image (see Walgrave and Swert (2007) for the impact of party–issue linkages on voters' issue-ownership considerations).

Functions and Audiences of Electoral Programs

This study contributes to our understanding of manifestos and to the debate on why parties write manifestos. Recall that theoretically there are two motivations for parties to write manifestos (Harmel et al., 2016). First, parties can write manifestos for mainly internal purposes: as a sort of to-do list for when they are elected into office, or to strengthen their collective identity and to mobilize their supporters, for example, by emphasizing the core issues of the party that their supporters care most about. Second, par-

ties can write manifestos to seek and mobilize voters and votes, for example, by emphasizing issues of public concern.

As manifesto messages are disseminated to voters by mass media, and these messages influence voters' perceptions of parties, parties have to carefully consider what they write in their manifestos. Instead of having the option to write it solely for one audience or the other, they instead face the dilemma of needing to satisfy both with the same document. Even if parties preferred writing manifestos for their own supporters, they cannot prevent the media from disseminating their manifesto to the voters. The identification of a strong and stable manifesto–media link does not mean that parties do write manifestos exclusively for voters and do not consider the interests or preferences of their supporters. However, it does make it clear that parties do need to consider that what they write in their programs is made public and as a consequence also known to voters. While other research has found that parties use different channels of communication to target diverse audiences (Elmelund-Præstekær, 2011), the conclusion here is that the portrayal of parties by mass media is not independent of what the party claims to stand for in its manifesto.

7.3 Limitations and Drawbacks

This study comes with some limitations and drawbacks. Of course, the number of limitations and drawbacks in such a comprehensive study is large. In the following section, I will focus on a few drawbacks and limitations of the study.

The Role of the Parties' Electoral Campaign Efforts

This study has largely ignored the role of parties' campaign efforts. Parties' campaign efforts could be either another mechanism through which manifesto messages are transmitted to the media, or an alternative explanation for what we observe here.

There are some studies that hint towards campaign efforts relaying manifesto messages to the media. Campaign managers have, for example, explained that manifestos shape the central themes and issues of the entire campaign (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu, 2011). Moreover, parties' press releases (Norris et al., 1999), as well as parties' advertisements, (Keil, 2003) at least partially reflect the central issues from manifestos. Even if the campaign relays the content of manifestos to journalists, this does not alter the conclusions drawn here—the campaign would then simply be the way through which manifesto content is passed on to journalists.

However, it may also be the case that the content of manifestos is directly transmitted from the campaign to voters, instead of it passing it through the media. This would go against a major premise made here: that is,

that the mass media is the central source of information for most voters. Additionally, there are also cases in which parties used varying strategies of topic emphasis in different channels of communication to target diverse audiences (Elmelund-Præstekær, 2011). This would suggest that manifesto content is not disseminated by the campaign to a significant degree. Finally, there is also empirical evidence that information is not passed directly from manifestos to voters, circumventing the mass media: in chapter 6 the direct effect of manifestos on media becomes insignificant when including the media in the model, suggesting that manifestos are communicated to voters entirely through media coverage.

The Focus on Traditional Media

Of course any study involving the mass media must address the elephant in the room—the internet. This study has focused solely on the traditional components of the mass media—mostly newspapers and television news broadcasts—and ignored any form of online communication, whether social media such as facebook, twitter or whatsapp, or online news sites and blogs. In the last few decades, the internet has drastically changed our access to information and even our ways of thinking. Today, it is hard to imagine how the world worked before any piece of information was just a click or a screen tap away. Undoubtedly this has also affected the ways in which parties can communicate with voters. At least theoretically, parties have now many more means with which to get their messages through to citizens, as they don't have to pass the gates of traditional mass media.

A representative survey conducted among internet users in Germany in 2016 indicated that for the first time, the use of social media to gather political information has reached the popularity of daily newspapers to keep respondents updated on political issues (Hölig and Hasebrink, 2016). However, the survey also discovered that use of social media is often complementary to the use of traditional mass media. Furthermore, in many cases social media only function as a referral to stories on the online portals of traditional media companies.

The Lack of Modeling the Campaign Dynamic

The conceptualization of the manifesto–media link proposed ignores short-term dynamics. In the empirical work, all of the articles and news stories from an outlet that were coded during a single electoral campaign were aggregated into a single score—which ignores any differences within the electoral campaign over time, and so changes in media coverage in the course of a single campaign are currently not taken into account. One, for example, might expect that the manifesto–media link is stronger immediately after the party convention when compared to either before or weeks after the

convention. Unfortunately, it was not possible to study such effects because there is no data on when programs were enacted or published. Moreover, it is likely that the dates on which the documents were officially published are often earlier than the data collection for the media news stories began. If the period of analysis were longer and always included the days surrounding the official publication of the electoral program then the effects might be even bigger, because party conventions are expected to generate media attention. At least small counter argument to this caveat is that long-term dynamics are often taken into account, for example by differentiating between long and short-term issue emphasis strategies (see chapter 5) or by including lagged dependent variables (see chapter 5 and 6).

Case Selection Constraints Due to Data Availability

The case selection of this study was largely constrained by the availability of data. While manifesto data is available for a large number of countries and elections, the lack of availability of media data placed much higher constraints on the case selection of this study. The study of party–issue linkages and reported left-right positions requires media content analytical data that allows making claims about parties in conjunction with issues (or even issue positions). As such data is expensive to produce, there are only a few publicly available data sets providing data in such a complex format on a transnational level. The small number of cases at the country level and the constrained selection of cases drastically limit the conclusions that can be drawn from the differences in party and media systems. The findings here should be considered only as initial tentative conclusions, and certainly should be replicated by future studies using a larger and/or other set of countries.

7.4 Suggestions for Future Research

The findings and contributions of this study, and its implications, generate new research questions that can be addressed by future research. In the following section, I illustrate four areas of research in which future research could focus on.

Replicating this Study

The replication of research is an essential step in the cumulative process of knowledge production (King, 1995) and consequently, this study makes suggestions on how it could be replicated. I consider the biggest drawback of this study the limited set of elections and countries, and the therefore only tentative conclusions on the effects of party and media systems. Future

research should extend the research to a larger set of countries to be able to look more systematically at differences between countries.

However, such an endeavor would only be possible in a large cooperative research project because the costs involved in coding the media content are extremely high. Two projects are currently coding media content data that could be used for such an extension. First, Kriesi and colleagues are extending their data set to include several more countries for the elections just before and after the economic and financial crisis of 2008/9. This data set includes countries in Central and Eastern Europe, which would increase the variation in the types of media and party systems. Second, Margit Tavits and Zeynep Somer-Topcu in cooperation with a team of researchers from Mannheim and many more affiliated researchers are also collecting content analytical data on media coverage during the electoral campaign of the last two elections in ten countries (Baumann and Gross, 2016). Their coding scheme is slightly different to the ones applied by Kriesi et al., but is compatible with the Manifesto coding scheme. Both data sets could be utilized to replicate and extend this study to a larger set of countries and elections. While they are both not yet publicly available, they will likely be publicly released in the future. This suggestion should certainly not stop researchers from focusing their efforts of replication using other data than these two.

Tackling Drawbacks and Limitations

Ideas for further avenues of research could be derived from the listed limitations and drawbacks of this study. First, one could adapt the concept of the manifesto–media link to social media. Admittedly, social media blurs the boundaries between the demand and supply sides of politics as postulated in this study. Traditional media outlets have a mediating role, transmitting the messages produced by political elites to their audiences. The separation of supply and demand as well as the roles of senders, mediators and audience is blurred in social media.While the content in traditional mass media is very selective and strongly filtered, social media bypasses this narrow media filter. With social media, the audience becomes a producer of content itself—however the parties remain producers of content too. The collection of social media platforms is much more fragmented than traditional mass media, which makes it much more difficult to identify for example "a media agenda". A useful differentiation could be between partisan actors and the broader audience. As a first step one, could study the manifesto–media link based on social media content produced by partisan actors such as party candidates, the party elite, official social media accounts of parties, etc. Do parties use social media to put forward the messages from their manifestos? Do they try to stay "on message", or do they target different audiences with different issues and positions (Norris et al., 1999)? A second step might

involve looking at whether the link holds for the social media content of a broader audience.

Second, one could try to model the campaign dynamic. This would require some theoretical ideas on how the manifesto–media link evolves during the campaign. A naive hypothesis would be that the manifesto–media link is stronger immediately after the publication of the manifesto, as the media covers the party conventions at which rank-and-file members enact the programs. This would require data on the publication dates of the electoral programs. However, if these dates do not fall in the field work period of the media data, then answering these questions would require more or different media data.

Ambiguity in Party Positions as Part of the Programmatic Offer

This study has disregarded an important aspect of the party's programmatic offer: parties can blur or clarify their positions, and has also assumed that parties make clear statements in their manifestos and make no attempts to hide their positions. This neglects parties' attempts to make ambiguous statements to obfuscate their position. Ambiguity can for example be found when parties make contradictory statements in their manifestos. One can also speak of ambiguity when a party does not communicate in a similar way on the same issue, because individual politicians or party streams have divergent stances on an issue.

Ambiguity as a party strategy has recently received a lot of scholarly attention (Rovny, 2012; Somer-Topcu, 2015; Lo, Proksch, and Slapin, 2016; Bräuninger and Giger, 2016). Blurring and clarifying a position can be considered (besides emphasizing and positioning) one of the most important strategies in the toolbox of party campaigning. Ambiguity in the programmatic offer is not only a consequence of a lack of ideological cohesion, but also seems to be a rational strategy of vote-seeking parties (Rovny, 2012). Blurring a position and thereby appealing to a broader audience is a successful strategy (Somer-Topcu, 2015) and in particular, moderate parties can profit from blurred positions, while extreme parties profit from clearer positions (Lo, Proksch, and Slapin, 2016).

From a normative perspective, blurring is not a good thing as voters have more difficulty correctly positioning a party and holding the party accountable. Strong blurring is likely to make voters rely on their existing knowledge on party positions and to not update their beliefs about a party and/or to project what they would like to see. Neither mechanism is conducive for political representation. Moreover, it is more difficult for voters to hold parties accountable, because it is more difficult for voters to check whether parties have sticked to their promises and positions if they are vague and ambiguous.

The mass media might play a crucial role here, as the media has the

tendency to pick up internal party conflicts, and may over-emphasize these conflicts and the apparent inconsistency of party positions. Conversely, the media strongly filters and selects information and hence may actually reduce the ambiguity, because the media tends to distill information to extract the most representative position.

Consequences of the Manifesto–Media Link

Last but not least, an avenue of future research is the study of the consequences of the manifesto–media link. Chapter six made a first attempt at studying whether reported left-right positions of parties in media coverage matter to voters when they form their perceived party images. Additionally, other consequences—such as the perceptions of a party's issue handling, or the perceived salience of an issue—are also affected by the manifesto–media link (Hayes, 2008a; Walgrave and Swert, 2007; Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans, 2009; Tresch, Lefevere, and Walgrave, 2015).

However, the manifesto–media link could also loop back to the parties themselves. One could, for example, expect that the strength of the manifesto–media link affects whether a party sticks to its program after the election (Costello and Thomson, 2008, see also). A party whose program is extensively covered by the mass media has to fear that voters will know the positions and priorities put forward by the party before the last election better, and punish a party when it does not stick to its program. Does the manifesto–media link increase party's accountability? Another aspect future research might pursue is concerns the manifesto–media link for media outlets. Is covering the electoral programs (even only in an abstract sense) a winning strategy for media outlets? Are manifesto messages in media coverage a product that is demanded on the news market, or is it a product of journalistic norms instead? These questions are neither a complete list of future research questions, nor should this study remain the final answer to whether the media covers the content of parties' electoral program, and how they do so. In any case, the conclusion that one can draw from this study is:

Mass media mediate manifesto messages.

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Berlin, July 2017

Appendices

Appendix A

Party Agendas and Media Agendas

Table A.1: Issue matching scheme

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
Agriculture and Farmers (1)	
109 National Agricultural policy	7032 Agriculture and Farmers - Neg
108 Agriculture and Farmers (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	7031 Agriculture and Farmers - Pos
Anti Imperalism (2)	
	103b Anti-Imperialism - Neg
15 Imperialism: : references to exerting influence (political, military or commercial) over other states controlling other countries as if they were part of an empire, mentions of de/colonization; references to self-government and independence for colonies; references to the imperial behaviour of the [country] or other countries.	103a Anti-Imperialism - Pos
Anti-Growth Economy (3)	
	416b Anti-Growth Economy - Neg
70 Anti-Growth Economy (references to alternative economic planning e.g Green Politics)	416a Anti-Growth Economy - Pos
Child Care (4)	
	5055 WS: Child Care - Neg
96 Child Care	5045 WS: Child Care - Pos
Constitutionalism (5)	
34 Discussion about national constitution	204 Constitutionalism - Neg
33 Constitutionalism (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	203 Constitutionalism - Pos
Controlled Economy (6)	
	412b Controlled Economy: General - Neg
54 Government intervention/control over the economy (prices , wages rents)	412a Controlled Economy: General - Pos
Corporatism (7)	
	405b Corporatism - Neg

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
61 Corporatism (involvement of collaborations of employees and trade unions in the economic planning)	405a Corporatism - Pos
Creating Jobs (8)	
71 Creating Jobs (specifically)	4081a Creating Jobs - Pos
75 Unemployment	4081b Creating Jobs - Neg
76 National employment policies	5041 WS: Job Programs - Pos
	5051 WS: Job Programs - Neg
Culture (9)	
88 Culture (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	502a Culture - Pos
89 National cultural policy (subsidies for theatreÕs, movies, music etc.; the export of own culture, language etc.	502b Culture - Neg
Cyprus Issue (10)	
	6012b Cyprus Issue (for Cyprus only) - Neg
106 Cyprus Issue	6012a Cyprus Issue (for Cyprus only) - Pos
Decentralization and Federalism (11)	
36 Federalism, Devolution, Regional Autonomy	302 Decentralization: General - Neg
35 Decentralization (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	301 Decentralization: General - Pos
Democracy (12)	
32 Democratic role of the media	
31 Democratic role of political parties	
29 Separation of church and state	
26 Democracy (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	202 Democracy - Pos
30 Rule of Law	
27 Democracy, sovereignty of the people	2021 Democracy - Neg
28 Division of power among brunches of government	
EC EU Structural Funds (13)	
	4041 EC/EU Structural Funds - Pos

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
58 EC/EU Structural Fund (EU funds for underdeveloped regions/areas)	4011 EC/EU Structural Funds - Neg
EMU (14)	
	4087 European Monetary Union/ European Currency - Neg
84 Effect of Euro on the Economy	4086 European Monetary Union/ European Currency - Pos
EU Enlargment (15)	
49 Membership in the EU of East European countries currently not in the EU	316 EC/EU Enlargement: General - Pos
	3162a Membership in the EU of East European countries currently not in the EU - Pos
	3163b Membership in the EU of Balkan countries currently not in the EU - Neg
50 Membership in the EU of Balkan countries currently not in the EU	3161 Membership of the Turkey in the EU - Pos
	3171 Membership of the Turkey in the EU - Neg
	317 EC/EU Enlargement: General - Neg
	3162b Membership in the EU of East European countries currently not in the EU - Neg
	3163a Membership in the EU of Balkan countries currently not in the EU - Pos
EU Integration (16)	
	6021b EU Integration - Neg
	3101 Voting Procedures in the (European) Council - Pos
	311 Competences of the European Council/ Council of Ministers: General - Neg
48 European Central Bank	307 Competences of the European Parliament - Neg
	313 Competences of the European Court of Justice - Neg

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
43 Competences of the European Commission (Powers of the European Commission)	1101a Financing the EC/EU - Pos
46 Competences of the European Court of Justice (references to the powers of the European Court of Justice)	3021 Transfer of Power to the EC/EU - Pos
1 European Integration	108 Europe, European Community/ Union: General - Pos 6021a EU Integration - Pos 3151 Mentions of the European Central Bank - Neg
44 Competences of the European Council/Council of Ministers (Powers of the European Council/Council of Ministers)	1101b Financing the EC/EU - Neg
	308 Competences of the European Commission - Pos 3141 Mentions of the European Central Bank - Pos 314 Competences of Other EC/EU Institutions: General - Pos 3111 Voting Procedures in the (European) Council - Neg 318b Complexity of the EC/EU Political System - Neg
47 Competences of Other EC/EU Institutions (References to the Powers of other EC/EU Institutions)	306 Competences of the European Parliament - Pos
45 Voting procedures in the (European) Council	3011 Transfer of Power to the EC/EU - Neg 318a Complexity of the EC/EU Political System - Pos 315 Competences of Other EC/EU Institutions: General - Neg 312 Competences of the European Court of Justice - Pos
42 Financing the EC/EU: National contributions to finance the EC/EU (from member states)	110 Europe, European Community/ Union: General - Neg

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
	309 Competences of the European Commission - Neg 310 Competences of the European Council/ Council of Ministers: General - Pos
Economic Goals / Conditions (17)	
51 Economic structure/policies/goals/conditions (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	
6 Interest Rates	408b Economic Goals: General - Neg
4 Economic Conditions	408a Economic Goals: General - Pos
82 Trade (international trade), trade deficits 85 Effects of financial crisis on domestic/ EU/ global economy (e.g. competitiveness, demand and supply, consumption, business climate) (If the topic is about the effects of the financial crisis on the DOMESTIC economy, make sure to the code Ò1Ó for V6a1!) 78 Business (companies, banks, industry, mergers, manufacturing,) 77 Stock market and its developments (shares, bonds, AEX, DAX, Dow Jones etc.) 79 Bankruptcy of business, companies, banks (specifically)	
Economic Orthodoxy (18)	
74 Inflation 80 Debt (public debt of a state, a community etc.)	414a Economic Orthodoxy - Pos 414b Economic Orthodoxy - Neg
Economic Planning (19)	
57 Economic Planning (of long-term economic planning, create of such a plan by authorities.)	404a Economic Planning: General - Pos 404b Economic Planning: General - Neg
Education (20)	

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
97 Education (code this if you cannot use specific codes) 121 National language policies	506 Education - Pos
98 National Education Policy	507 Education - Neg
Environment (21)	
8 Climate Change	501b Environmental Protection - Neg
2 Environment	501a Environmental Protection - Pos
87 National environmental policy 86 Environmental Protection	
Ethnic Minorities (22)	
	7054b UMG: Ethnic Minorities/People of the Manifesto Country Living Abroad - Neg
114 Ethnic Minorities	7054a UMG: Ethnic Minorities/People of the Manifesto Country Living Abroad - Pos
Exectutive Administrative Efficiency (23)	
	303b Executive and Administrative Efficiency - Neg
37 Executive and Administrative Efficiency; Efficient government and administration.	303a Executive and Administrative Efficiency - Pos
Fight against terrorism (24)	
101 Fight against terrorism	6051a Fight against terrorism - Pos 6051b Fight against terrorism - Neg
Foreign Policy Eastern Europe (25)	
10 Foreign policy towards Eastern European countries that are now members of the EU	1011 FSR to Eastern European Countries of the EU - Pos
	1022 FSR to Eastern European Countries not in the EU - Neg
11 Foreign policy towards Eastern European countries that are not members of the EU	1012 FSR to Eastern European Countries not in the EU - Pos
	1021 FSR to Eastern European Countries of the EU - Neg
Foreign Policy Russia (26)	
12 Foreign Policy towards Russia	1013 FSR to Russia - Pos 1023 FSR to Russia - Neg
Foreign Special Relations (27)	

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
9 Foreign policy in general, relations between states or (international) political organisations	101 Foreign Special Relationships (FSR): General - Pos
	102 Foreign Special Relationships (FSR): General - Neg
Free Enterprise (28)	
	401b Free Enterprise: General - Neg
52 Free enterprise capitalism	401a Free Enterprise: General - Pos
Freedom and Human Rights (29)	
	2012b Human Rights - Neg
24 Civil rights, Civil liberties, Rights in general	2011b Freedom - Neg
25 Equality before Law	2012a Human Rights - Pos
23 Freedom and Human Rights (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	2011a Freedom - Pos
Handicapped (30)	
	7051b UMG: Handicapped - Neg
111 Handicapped (policies aimed at, treatment)	7051a UMG: Handicapped - Pos
Health Care and Nursing (31)	
7 Health Care	5043 WS: Health Care and Nursing Service - Pos
93 Nursing Services	5053 WS: Health Care and Nursing Service - Neg
94 National health care policy	
Homosexuals (32)	
112 Homosexuals	7052a UMG: Homosexuals - Pos
113 Gay marriage	7052b UMG: Homosexuals - Neg
Immigration (33)	
	7053b UMG: Immigrants and Foreigners in the Manifesto Country - Neg
5 Immigration	6011a Immigration - Pos
	7053a UMG: Immigrants and Foreigners in the Manifesto Country - Pos
105 National Immigration policy	6011b Immigration - Neg
Incentives, Taxes, Wages (34)	

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
63 Incentives (references to tax and wage policies, financial incentives to start enterprises or stimulate investment)	402a Incentives - Pos
83 Wages and Earnings	
81 Taxes	402b Incentives - Neg
Internationalism (35)	
13 Foreign Policy towards United States of America	107 Internationalism - Pos
	109 Internationalism - Neg
Labour Groups (36)	
	702 Labour Groups - Neg
107 Labour Groups (references to trade unions, unemployed, employees)	701 Labour Groups - Pos
Labour Migration (37)	
	4083 Labour Migration: Positive - Neg
72 Labour Migration	4082 Labour Migration: Positive - Pos
Law and Order / Crime (38)	
100 Law and Order (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	605a Law and Order: General - Pos
103 Courts, trials, court decisions	
102 National Crime prevention policy(ies)	605b Law and Order: General - Neg
Linguistic Groups (39)	
	7064b NEDG: Linguistic Groups - Neg
120 Linguistic Groups (policies aimed at, treatment)	7064a NEDG: Linguistic Groups - Pos
Market Regulation (40)	
62 National policy on monopolies, Trusts, consumer and small businesses protection	403a Market Regulations - Pos
	403b Market Regulations - Neg
Military (41)	
18 Armed forces (modernization, structure, military strength)	
19 NATO, Military treaties obligations, Military cooperation	

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
16 Military in general (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	105 Military - Neg
17 Military expenditure	
14 Defence and national security of national government	104 Military - Pos
Morality / Religion / Anti-Abortion (42)	
144 Religion	604 Traditional Morality - Neg
117 Abortion	603 Traditional Morality - Pos
Multiculturalism (43)	
	608 Multiculturalism - Neg
99 Multiculturalism (cultural diversity, cultural plurality)	607 Multiculturalism - Pos
National Way of Life (44)	
	602 National Way of Life - Neg
104 National Way of Life (reference to patriotism/nationalism, support/opposition for established national ideas and/or values	601 National Way of Life - Pos
Nationalization (45)	
	413b Nationalization: Generalization - Neg
59 Government Ownership, nationalisation in general (land. Banks, etc)	413a Nationalization: Generalization - Pos
Non-Economic Demographic Groups (46)	
	706b NEDG: General - Neg
115 Non-economic Demographic Groups (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	706a NEDG: General - Pos
Old People (47)	
	7062b NEDG: Old People - Neg
118 Old People (policies aimed at, treatment)	7062a NEDG: Old People - Pos
Peace (48)	
22 Peace keeping missions/troops	
20 Peace (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	106a Peace - Pos
21 Peace negotiations	106b Peace - Neg
Pensions (49)	
	5052 WS: Pensions - Neg
92 Pensions	5042 WS: Pensions - Pos
Political Authority (50)	

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
41 Political Authority: Strong Government, Government Stability	305a Political Authority - Pos
	305b Political Authority - Neg
Political Corruption (51)	
39 EU political corruption, fraud, scandals EU-level politicians or institutions, including regulations and anti-corruption measures (not Abuse of EU funds by member states)	304b Political Corruption - Neg
38 Political Corruption (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	304a Political Corruption - Pos
40 National Political corruption (political parties, politicians, abuse of national funds, etc., including regulations and anti-corruption measures)	
Privatisation (52)	
60 Privatisation (of government owned business or industry)	4132a Privatisation - Pos
	4132b Privatisation - Neg
Productivity (53)	
64 Productivity (references to economic growth, the need to increase/facilitate production)	410a Productivity - Pos
	410b Productivity - Neg
Protectionism (54)	
69 Protectionism (as opposed to international cooperation, methods to protect national markets, economic growth),	406 Protectionism - Pos
	407 Protectionism - Neg
Publicly Owned Industry (55)	
56 Publicly-Owned Industry	4123a Publicly-Owned Industry - Pos
	4123b Publicly-Owned Industry - Neg
Single Market (56)	
73 Single Market/Common market	4084 Single Market - Pos
	4085 Single Market - Neg
Social Housing (57)	
95 Social Housing	5044 WS: Social Housing - Pos

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
	5054 WS: Social Housing - Neg
Social Justice (58)	
	503b Social Justice - Neg
90 Social Justice	503a Social Justice - Pos
Social Ownership (59)	
	4121b Social Ownership - Neg
55 Social Ownership	4121a Social Ownership - Pos
Technology and Infrastructure (60)	
66 National energy policy	411b Technology and Infrastructure - Neg
67 National transportation policy	
68 National media and ICT policy	
65 Technology and Infrastructure (modernization, development of industry, methods of transport, communication, research)	411a Technology and Infrastructure - Pos
Underprivileged Minority Groups (61)	
110 Underprivileged Minority Groups (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	705a UMP: General - Pos
	705b UMP: General - Neg
Unmatched Manifesto Issues (62)	
999 unmatched manifesto issue	704a Middle Class and Professional Groups - Pos 4012 Property-Restitution - Pos 606a Social Harmony - Pos 704b Middle Class and Professional Groups - Neg 4124a Socialist Property - Pos 4122a Mixed Economy - Pos 4124b Socialist Property - Neg 606b Social Harmony - Neg 4131 Property-Restitution - Neg 4122b Mixed Economy - Neg
Unmatched Media Issues (63)	
140 Crime story	
138 Other topic related to elections	
136 National, regional, local elections in EU Countries	

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
133 EU-level politiciansÕ personality (e.g., candidate MEPÕs personal character, background, leadership qualities)	
143 (Natural) disasters (earthquakes, floods)	
147 Any other topic	
123 European Elections: profiles of candidates, politicians, parties; their images and strategic positions	
130 European Elections: Election laws, rules, regulations	
139 Accidents	
131 European Elections: (Formal, public) debates (as an event) between parties, politicians	
125 Media coverage of the campaign	
135 Other EU election-related topics	
127 European Election: Voter turnout (e.g. expectations) (only if EU elections)	
134 Vote advice for European Elections	
141 Culture (arts, films/movies, theatre, music, media)	
126 European elections: Voters, public opinion, polls, (anticipated) electoral success	
122 European Elections: European Elections in general	
129 European Elections: Voting procedures (e.g. electronic voting machines, foreign votes	
142 Human interest (soft news: about prominent persons, celebrities, anniversaries, weddings, animals, strange/funny events, etc.)	
3 Globalization	998 Unmatched media issue
137 National elections in non-EU Countries	

Media Categories	Manifesto Categories
128 European Elections: list of party positions on issues (a Òmanifesto storyÒ)	
132 Political consequences of EP election outcome (e.g. for national-level politicians, parties)	
124 European Elections: Electioneering, campaigning (strategy, style, finance, fundraising, events, media appearances, endorsements, targeting of electoral groups, political marketing, publicity, advertising)	
145 Sports	
146 Weather Report/ Forecast	
Welfare State (64)	
	505 WS: General - Neg
91 Welfare State (code this if you cannot use specific codes)	504 WS: General - Pos
Women (65)	
116 Women (policies aimed at, treatment)	7061a NEDG: Women - Pos
	7061b NEDG: Women - Neg
Young People (66)	
119 Young People (policies aimed at, treatment)	7063a NEDG: Young People - Pos
	7063b NEDG: Young People - Neg
other issue (99)	
	415b Marxist Analysis - Neg
	409b Keynesian Demand Management - Neg
	409a Keynesian Demand Management - Pos
	415a Marxist Analysis - Pos

Table A.2: Dataset coverage

Parties	Media Outlets
	Austria
SPOE	neue kronen zeitung
OEVP	zib 19.30 (orf1)
GRUENE	die presse
	aktuell 19.20 (atv)
FPOE	der standard
	Belgium-Fla
NVA	het laatste nieuws
GROEN!	de standard
SP.A	vtm-nieuws 19.00 (vtm)
VB	
CDV	de morgen
OPEN VLD	het journaal 19.00 (vrt)
	Belgium-Wal
	le journal 19.00 (rtl-tv)
FN	la libre belgique
PS	jt meteo 19.30 (la une)
MR	le soir
ECOLO	la derniere heure
	Bulgaria
GERB	btv 19:00 (btv)
NDSV	20:00 (bnt kanal 1)
DPS	trud
BSP	dnevnik
ATAKA	24 chasa
	Cyprus
EDEK	20.00 (rik1)
AKEL	fileleytheros
DIKO	haravgi
	ant1 20.15 (antenna)
DISY	simerini
	Czech Republic
ODS	udalosti 19.00 (ceska
KSCM	pravo
CSSD	blesk
	televizni noviny 19.30
KDU-CSL	mlada fronta
	Denmark
KF	morgenavisen jyllandsp.
DF	ekstra bladet

Parties	Media Outlets
V	tv-avisen 21.00 (dr 1)
SD	nyhederne 19.00 (tv2)
RV	politiken
	Estonia
KE	sl . . . htuleht
SDE	aktuaalne kaamera 21.00 (etv)
ER	eesti ekspress wochenblatt
	reporter 19.00 (kanal2)
IRL	postimees
	Finland
KOK	iltasanomat
PERUS	tv-uutiset ja sŠŠ 20.30 (yle
VIHR	
KD	aamulehti
KESK	helsingin sanomat
SDP	kymmenen uutiset 22:00 (mtv3)
VAS	
	France
UMP	
EXTR.GAUCHE	le monde
PS	le journal 20.00 (f2)
MODEM	le journal 20.00 (tf1)
FN	libŽration
EE	le figaro
	Germany
CDU	faz
SPD	rtl aktuell 18.45 (rtl)
	18.30 (sat1)
B90/GR	bild
CSU	sz
FDP	heute 19.00 (zdf)
DIE LINKE	tagesschau 20.00 (ard)
	Greece
OP	20.00 (mega)
PASOK	(21.00)
SYRIZA	
ND	ta nea
LAOS	kathimerini
KKE	eleftherotypia
	Hungary
MDF	nepszabadsag
FIDESZ	blikk

Parties	Media Outlets
JOBBIK	magyar nemzet
SZDSZ	esti h'rad— 18:30 (rtl klub)
MSZP	h'r‡do 20:30 (m2)
	Ireland
GP	the (daily) star
LAB	nine news 21.00 (rtei1)
SF	tv3 news 17:30 (tv3)
FG	the irish times
FF	irish independent
	Italy
LN	il giornale
IDV	il corriere della sera
PDL	tg1 20.00 (raiuno)
PD	la repubblica
	tg5 20.00 (canale5)
	Latvia
TB/LNNK	latvijas avize
	t zi?as 20:00 (lnt)
JL	diena
	panor?mas 20:30 (ltv)
TP	vesti segodnya
	Lithuania
TS-LKD	TV 3 Zinios
DP	lietuvos rytas
LSDP	panorama 20.30 (ltv)
LICS	respublika
LRLS	vakaro zinios
TT	
	Malta
PN	orizzont
	the times (engl.)
	l-a?barijiet tvm 20.00 (tvm)
PL	nazzjon
	one news 19.30 (one tv)
	Netherlands
SP	
PVV	
GL	rtl nieuws 19.30 (rtl)
CDA	de telegraaf
D66	nrc handelsblad
VVD	
CU/SGP	de volkskrant

Parties	Media Outlets
PVDA	nos journaal 20.00
	Poland
PSL	rzeczpospolita
	fakty 19:00 (tvn)
PIS	fakt
PO	gazeta wyborcza
SLD-UP	wiadomo?ci 19:30 (tvp1)
	Portugal
PSD	telejornal 20:00 (rtp1)
CDS-PP	jornal de not'cias
B.E.	correio da manha
PS	publico
	jornal nacional (20:00) (tvi)
	Romania
	stirile 19.00 (pro tv)
UDMR	telejurnal 20:00 (tvr1)
PNL	jurnalul national
PRM	libertatea
PD-L	evenimentul zilei
	Slovakia
SNS	
SMK-MKP	televizne noviny 19:00 (tv ma
SMER	spravy 19:30 (stv 1)
KDH	daily pravda
LÕS-HZDS	nov? cas
SDKò-DS	sme/pr‡ca
	Slovenia
ZARES	
SLS	24ur 19.00 (pop tv)
NSI	slovenske novice
SD	the delo
SDS	dnevnik 19.00 (tv s1)
LDS	dnevnik
	Spain
IU-ICV	abc
UPYD	telediario-2 21.00 (tve1)
	telecinco 20.30 (tele5)
	noticias2 21.00 (antena3)
PSOE	el pais
PP	el mundo
	Sweden
FP	dagens nyheter

Parties	Media Outlets
MP	nyheterna 18.25 (tv4)
KD	svenska dagbladet
M	rapport 19.30 (tv2)
C	aftonbladet
V	
S	
United Kingdom	
PC	itv news at 10
SNP	
LDP	bbc1 news at 10
LAB	sun
CON	guardian
BNP	daily telegraph

Appendix B

Party Strategies and Party–Issue Linkages

Table B.1: Dataset coverage

country	party	elections
Austria	SPÖ	1994, 1999, 2002, 2006
	ÖVP	1994, 1999, 2002, 2006
	FPÖ	1994, 1999, 2002, 2006
	Green Party	1994, 1999, 2002, 2006
	Lib Forum	1994
	BZÖ	2006
Germany	CDU/CSU	1994, 1998, 2002, 2005
	SPD	1994, 1998, 2002, 2005
	FDP	1994, 1998, 2002, 2005
	Green Party	1994, 1998, 2002, 2005
	PDS / Left	1994, 1998, 2002, 2005
Netherlands	PvdA	1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006
	D66	1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006
	CDA	1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006
	VVD	1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006
	Green Left	1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006
	SP	2002, 2003, 2006
	List Pim Fortuyn	2002, 2003
	PVV	2006
United Kingdom	Cons	1992, 1997, 2001, 2005
	Labour	1992, 1997, 2001, 2005
	Lib	1992, 1997, 2001, 2005
Switzerland	SPS	1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007
	CVP	1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007
	Lib	1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007
	SVP	1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007
	Greens	1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007

Press outlets in the sample: Austria (Die Presse, Kronenzeitung), Germany (Süddeutsche Zeitung, Bild), Netherlands (NRC Handelsblad, Algemeend Dagblad), UK (The Times, The Sun), Switzerland (NZZ, Blick).

Table B.2: Issue matching scheme

issue categories	Kriesi et al.	Manifesto: positive codes	Manifesto: negative codes
Economic Liberalism	201-211	401 Free Enterprise 407: Protectionism: negative 408: Economic Goals 402: Incentives: positive	404 Economic Planning: positive 403 Market Regulation 405 Corporatism: positive 406 Protectionism: positive 412 Controlled Economy 413 Nationalisation: positive
Welfare	100-108	504 Welfare State expansion 503 Equality: positive	505 Welfare State limitation
Budget	300-303	414 Economic Orthodoxy	409 Keynesian Demand Management: positive
Minorities & Liberalism	405-413	604 Traditional Morality: negative 705 Minority Groups: positive 706 Non-Econ. Demographic Groups: positive	603 Traditional Morality: positive
Europe	500-504	108 European Integration: positive	110 European Integration: negative
Peace & Internationalism	400-403	107 Internationalism: positive 106 Peace: positive	109 Internationalism: negative
Culture	600-607	502 Culture: positive 506 Education Expansion	507 Education Limitation
Anti-Immigration	700-703	608 Multiculturalism: negative	607 Multiculturalism: positive
Military	800-802	104 Military: positive	105 Military: negative

Domestic Security	900-905	605 Law and Order: positive 304 Political Corruption: negative	201 Freedom and Human Rights: positive 202 Democracy: positive
Environment	1000-1005	501 Environmental Protection: positive 416 Anti-Growth Economy: positive	410 Economic Growth: positive

Table B.3: Negative binomial regression: Predicting the number of party-issue linkages in election news coverage at national elections in Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK (1991-2007)

	(1) + lagged dv		(2) only issue subset	
Number of Party-Issue Linkages				
mean issue emphasis of competitors	0.974**	(0.008)	0.959*	(0.020)
incumbent	1.861***	(0.148)	1.893***	(0.258)
issue polarization of competitors	1.147	(0.099)	1.075	(0.130)
vote share	1.031***	(0.007)	1.028*	(0.013)
lagged dependent variable	1.003	(0.002)	1.005	(0.004)
issue distinctiveness	0.994	(0.087)	1.127	(0.118)
long-term issue emphasis	1.030***	(0.009)	1.052*	(0.021)
short-term issue emphasis	1.022***	(0.006)	1.037*	(0.017)
election/outlet dummies	Yes		Yes	
party dummies	Yes		Yes	
Alpha	0.326		0.356	
Deviance R2	0.423		0.407	
BIC	9101.3		3826.0	
Loglikelihood	-4319.9		-1707.1	
N	1710		768	

* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001

The overall salience of an issue is used as an exposure variable.

Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table B.4: Negative binomial regression: Predicting the number of party-issue linkages in election news coverage at national elections (Jackknife test)

	(1) w/o Austria		(2) w/o UK		(3) w/o Germany		(4) w/o Netherlands		(5) w/o Switzerland	
Number of Party-Issue Linkages										
mean issue emphasis of competitors	0.974**	(0.008)	0.974***	(0.007)	0.972***	(0.006)	0.974***	(0.008)	0.977**	(0.008)
incumbent	1.984***	(0.128)	2.035***	(0.142)	2.296***	(0.172)	1.548***	(0.077)	1.951***	(0.114)
issue polarization of competitors	1.062	(0.094)	1.066	(0.083)	1.075	(0.084)	1.025	(0.076)	1.054	(0.088)
vote share	1.026***	(0.006)	1.025***	(0.006)	1.024***	(0.005)	1.023***	(0.005)	1.029***	(0.006)
issue distinctiveness	1.118	(0.092)	1.104	(0.082)	1.052	(0.076)	1.154	(0.088)	1.129	(0.101)
long-term issue emphasis	1.030***	(0.009)	1.032***	(0.008)	1.033***	(0.007)	1.031***	(0.008)	1.027**	(0.010)
short-term issue emphasis	1.028***	(0.005)	1.031***	(0.005)	1.034***	(0.005)	1.028***	(0.005)	1.032***	(0.007)
election/outlet dummies	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
party dummies	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Alpha	0.329		0.323		0.285		0.289		0.337	
Deviance R2	0.460		0.418		0.458		0.437		0.484	
BIC	9769.8		10476.7		9449.1		9004.0		9272.8	
Loglikelihood	-4654.7		-4994.4		-4491.2		-4291.3		-4412.3	
N	1897		2042		1858		1622		1753	

* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001

The overall salience of an issue is used as an exposure variable.

Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table B.5: Negative binomial regression: Predicting the number of party-issue linkages in election news coverage at national elections (country-specific models)

	(1) Austria		(2) UK		(3) Germany		(4) Netherlands		(5) Switzerland	
Number of Party-Issue Linkages										
mean issue emphasis of competitors	0.975*	(0.011)	0.983	(0.016)	0.987	(0.024)	0.970*	(0.012)	0.966***	(0.010)
incumbent	1.677***	(0.238)	1.574***	(0.115)	1.465***	(0.115)	3.470***	(0.357)	2.545***	(0.411)
issue polarization of competitors	1.070	(0.126)	0.943	(0.162)	0.953	(0.177)	1.085	(0.212)	1.026	(0.160)
vote share	1.021	(0.011)	1.033**	(0.011)	1.059**	(0.020)	1.030**	(0.010)	1.013	(0.009)
issue distinctiveness	1.053	(0.136)	1.267	(0.184)	1.456	(0.337)	0.977	(0.169)	1.098	(0.131)
long-term issue emphasis	1.031*	(0.013)	1.013	(0.022)	1.015	(0.025)	1.030*	(0.013)	1.039***	(0.011)
short-term issue emphasis	1.035**	(0.011)	1.030	(0.017)	1.009	(0.012)	1.049***	(0.013)	1.029***	(0.006)
election/outlet dummies	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
party dummies	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Alpha	0.253		0.246		0.417		0.318		0.244	
Deviance R2	0.398		0.522		0.459		0.508		0.252	
BIC	2241.9		1532.7		2528.0		2942.7		2727.7	
Loglikelihood	-1058.1		-716.6		-1203.2		-1390.0		-1297.8	
N	396		251		435		671		540	

* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001

The overall salience of an issue is used as an exposure variable.

Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses.

Appendix C

Stated, Reported and Perceived Left-Right Positions

Table C.1: Dataset coverage (parties and electoral campaigns)

country	party	elections
Switzerland	SVP	1995, 1999, 2003, 2007
	CVP	1995, 1999, 2003, 2007
	SP	1995, 1999, 2003, 2007
	Greens	1995, 1999, 2003, 2007
	FDP	1995, 1999, 2003, 2007
Germany	CDU/CSU	1998, 2002, 2005
	SPD	1998, 2002, 2005
	FDP	1998, 2002, 2005
	Greens	1998, 2002, 2005
	PDS / Left	1998, 2002, 2005
Netherlands	PvdA	1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006
	D66	1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006
	CDA	1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006
	VVD	1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006
	Green Left	1994, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006
	SP	2002, 2003, 2006
	LPF	2002, 2003
United Kingdom	Cons	1997, 2001, 2005
	Labour	1997, 2001, 2005
	Lib	1997, 2001, 2005

Table C.2: Dataset coverage (press outlets)

country	tabloid newspaper	broadsheet newspaper
Switzerland	Blick	Neue Zürcher Zeitung
Germany	Bild	Süddeutsche Zeitung
Netherlands	Algemeen Dagblad	NRC Handelsblad
United Kingdom	The Sun	The Times

Table C.3: Classification of issues into left (L), right (R) and consensus (C) issues

code	description	DE	UK	NL	CH
101	Foreign Special Relationships: pos.	C	C	R	C
102	Foreign Special Relationships: neg.	C	C	L	L
103	Anti-Imperialism: pos.	C	C	R	L
104	Military: pos.	C	R	R	R
105	Military: neg.	L	L	L	L
106	Peace: pos.	C	L	L	L
107	Internationalism: pos.	L	L	L	L
108	European Integration: pos.	C	L	R	L
109	Internationalism: neg.	C	C	L	C
110	European Integration: neg.	L	C	L	R
201	Freedom and Human Rights: pos.	L	R	C	L
202	Democracy: pos.	L	L	L	L
203	Constitutionalism: pos.	C	C	R	L
204	Constitutionalism: neg.	L	C	L	R
301	Decentralisation: pos.	C	C	R	R
302	Centralisation: pos.	C	C	C	C
303	Governmental and Administrative Efficiency: pos.	R	R	R	R
304	Political Corruption: neg.	C	C	C	L
305	Political Authority: pos.	C	C	C	R
401	Free Enterprise: pos.	R	R	R	R
402	Incentives: pos.	C	R	R	R
403	Market Regulation: pos.	C	L	L	R
404	Economic Planning: pos.	L	L	L	L
405	Corporatism: pos.	L	C	R	C
406	Protectionism: pos.	C	C	L	R
407	Protectionism: neg.	C	R	R	C
408	Economic Goals	C	C	L	R
409	Keynesian Demand Management: pos.	C	C	R	L
410	Economic Growth	C	R	R	R
411	Technology and Infrastructure: pos	C	C	C	R
412	Controlled Economy: pos.	L	L	L	L
413	Nationalisation: pos.	C	L	L	L
414	Economic Orthodoxy: pos.	R	R	R	R
415	Marxist Analysis: pos.	L	C	C	L
416	Anti-Growth Economy: pos.	L	L	L	L
501	Environmental Protection: pos.	L	L	L	C
502	Culture: pos.	C	L	L	L
503	Equality: pos.	L	C	L	L
504	Welfare State Expansion	L	L	L	L
505	Welfare State Limitation	R	C	R	R
506	Education Expansion	C	L	C	L
507	Education Limitation	C	C	C	R
601	NationalWay of Life: pos.	R	R	C	R
602	NationalWay of Life: neg.	L	C	L	L
603	Traditional Morality: pos.	R	R	R	R

604	Traditional Morality: neg.	L	C	C	L
605	Law and Order: pos.	C	R	R	R
606	Civic Mindedness: pos.	R	C	R	L
607	Multiculturalism: pos.	L	C	C	L
608	Multiculturalism: neg.	C	C	R	C
701	Labour Groups: pos.	L	L	L	L
702	Labour Groups: neg.	C	R	R	R
703	Agriculture: pos.	C	R	R	R
704	Middle Class and Professional Groups: pos.	C	C	R	R
705	Minority Groups: pos.	L	R	L	L
706	Non-Economic Demographic Groups: pos.	C	C	C	L
0	No meaningful category applies				

based on Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006; Franzmann, 2010.

Table C.4: Issue matching scheme

Kriesi et al. Code	Label	Direction	CMP code
99	n.a.	Pos.	0
99	n.a.	Neg.	0
100	health care	Pos.	504
100	health care	Neg.	505
101	retirement	Pos.	504
101	retirement	Neg.	505
102	anti unemployment	Pos.	701
102	anti unemployment	Neg.	702
103	anti poverty	Pos.	504
103	anti poverty	Neg.	505
104	family	Pos.	504
104	family	Neg.	505
105	consumer	Pos.	403
105	consumer	Neg.	0
106	redistribution	Pos.	503
106	redistribution	Neg.	505
107	disabled	Pos.	705
107	disabled	Neg.	505
108	housing	Pos.	504
108	housing	Neg.	505
200	labor market	Pos.	401
200	labor market	Neg.	412
201	free trade	Pos.	407
201	free trade	Neg.	406
202	agriculture	Pos.	703
202	agriculture	Neg.	403
203	finance	Pos.	401
203	finance	Neg.	403
204	enterprise	Pos.	401
204	enterprise	Neg.	403
205	competition	Pos.	403
205	competition	Neg.	401
206	deregulation	Pos.	407
206	deregulation	Neg.	403
207	privatization	Pos.	401
207	privatization	Neg.	413
208	anti keynesian	Pos.	402
208	anti keynesian	Neg.	409
209	anti corporatism	Pos.	402
209	anti corporatism	Neg.	405
210	promotion	Pos.	402
210	promotion	Neg.	401
211	ecolib general	Pos.	401
211	ecolib general	Neg.	412
300	budgetary rigour	Pos.	414
300	budgetary rigour	Neg.	409

301	indirect tax	Pos.	0
301	indirect tax	Neg.	0
302	direct tax	Pos.	0
302	direct tax	Neg.	0
303	wealth tax	Pos.	402
303	wealth tax	Neg.	503
400	internat cooperation	Pos.	107
400	internat cooperation	Neg.	109
401	solidarity	Pos.	107
401	solidarity	Neg.	109
402	peace	Pos.	106
402	peace	Neg.	104
403	disarmement	Pos.	105
403	disarmement	Neg.	104
404	anti patriotism	Pos.	602
404	anti patriotism	Neg.	601
405	religious tolerance	Pos.	607
405	religious tolerance	Neg.	608
406	gender	Pos.	503
406	gender	Neg.	0
407	human rights	Pos.	201
407	human rights	Neg.	0
408	gay rights	Pos.	705
408	gay rights	Neg.	603
409	abortion	Pos.	604
409	abortion	Neg.	603
410	liberal drugs	Pos.	0
410	liberal drugs	Neg.	605
411	democratization	Pos.	202
411	democratization	Neg.	0
412	tolerance	Pos.	604
412	tolerance	Neg.	603
413	anti traditions	Pos.	602
413	anti traditions	Neg.	601
500	deepening	Pos.	108
500	deepening	Neg.	110
501	eu neoliberal	Pos.	407
501	eu neoliberal	Neg.	406
502	euro	Pos.	108
502	euro	Neg.	110
503	social europe	Pos.	108
503	social europe	Neg.	110
504	enlargement	Pos.	108
504	enlargement	Neg.	110
600	educ primary-sec	Pos.	506
600	educ primary-sec	Neg.	507
601	educ vocational	Pos.	411
601	educ vocational	Neg.	507
602	educ tertiary	Pos.	506

602	educ tertiary	Neg.	507
603	research	Pos.	411
603	research	Neg.	0
604	art	Pos.	502
604	art	Neg.	0
605	sports	Pos.	502
605	sports	Neg.	0
606	media	Pos.	502
606	media	Neg.	0
607	education unspecific	Pos.	502
607	education unspecific	Neg.	0
700	anti immigration	Pos.	601
700	anti immigration	Neg.	602
701	anti islam	Pos.	608
701	anti islam	Neg.	607
702	anti integration	Pos.	608
702	anti integration	Neg.	607
703	xenophobia	Pos.	608
703	xenophobia	Neg.	607
800	defense spending	Pos.	104
800	defense spending	Neg.	105
801	defense treaties	Pos.	104
801	defense treaties	Neg.	106
802	military manpower	Pos.	104
802	military manpower	Neg.	105
900	anti corruption	Pos.	304
900	anti corruption	Neg.	0
901	police	Pos.	605
901	police	Neg.	0
902	courts	Pos.	202
902	courts	Neg.	0
903	anti terrorism	Pos.	605
903	anti terrorism	Neg.	0
904	anti crime	Pos.	605
904	anti crime	Neg.	0
905	anti youth delinquency	Pos.	605
905	anti youth delinquency	Neg.	0
1000	natural resources	Pos.	501
1000	natural resources	Neg.	0
1001	anti pollution	Pos.	501
1001	anti pollution	Neg.	0
1002	anti nuclear energy	Pos.	501
1002	anti nuclear energy	Neg.	0
1003	anti genetic engineering	Pos.	501
1003	anti genetic engineering	Neg.	0
1004	anti climate change	Pos.	501
1004	anti climate change	Neg.	0
1005	sustainability	Pos.	501
1005	sustainability	Neg.	0

1100	federalism	Pos.	301
1100	federalism	Neg.	302
1101	political efficency	Pos.	303
1101	political efficency	Neg.	0
1102	separation powers	Pos.	202
1102	separation powers	Neg.	0
1103	reforms	Pos.	303
1103	reforms	Neg.	0
1200	priv transportation	Pos.	411
1200	priv transportation	Neg.	0
1201	pub transportation	Pos.	411
1201	pub transportation	Neg.	0
1202	airports	Pos.	411
1202	airports	Neg.	0
1203	energy security	Pos.	411
1203	energy security	Neg.	0
1204	communication	Pos.	411
1204	communication	Neg.	0
1205	transport security	Pos.	411
1205	transport security	Neg.	0
1206	infrastructure unspecific	Pos.	411
1206	infrastructure unspecific	Neg.	0

Table C.5: Perception of parties' left-right positions by voters - tabloid newspapers

	without UK	without DE	without NL	without CH
party image (t-1)	0.813***	0.757***	0.779***	0.790***
	(0.054)	(0.050)	(0.114)	(0.044)
platform position	0.235^{+}	0.0973	0.153	0.114
	(0.132)	(0.097)	(0.100)	(0.141)
reported pos.	-0.0141	0.109^{+}	0.0918	0.0609
	(0.078)	(0.057)	(0.074)	(0.061)
party visibility	0.0160*	0.0349**	0.0245^{+}	0.0324**
	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.009)
reported pos. × party visibility	0.154*	0.155**	0.110**	0.142*
	(0.058)	(0.046)	(0.033)	(0.049)
party image (t-1) × party visibility	-0.0856^{+}	-0.0701*	-0.112	-0.106**
	(0.042)	(0.031)	(0.095)	(0.033)
Constant	0.0214	0.0255	0.0215	0.0317*
	(0.013)	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.014)
r2_a	0.957	0.958	0.947	0.950
N	48	50	33	46

* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001.

Table C.6: Perception of parties' left-right positions by voters - broadsheet newspapers

	without UK	without DE	without NL	without CH
party image (t-1)	0.837***	0.760***	0.721***	0.777***
	(0.051)	(0.062)	(0.080)	(0.070)
platform position	0.153	0.164	0.220^{+}	0.161
	(0.128)	(0.122)	(0.102)	(0.150)
reported pos.	0.0384	0.0802	0.113^{+}	0.0581
	(0.074)	(0.056)	(0.059)	(0.048)
party visibility	0.00737	0.0198	0.0140	0.0226
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.018)
reported pos. × party visibility	0.0230	0.0596	-0.0640	0.0436
	(0.091)	(0.090)	(0.067)	(0.081)
party image (t-1) × party visibility	-0.0415	-0.0595	-0.0164	-0.0734
	(0.052)	(0.055)	(0.079)	(0.054)
Constant	0.0237	0.0300	0.0298	0.0340
	(0.015)	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.019)
r2_a	0.953	0.952	0.953	0.944
N	51	53	36	49

* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001.

Table C.7: First Difference Model: Perception of Shifts in Parties' Left-Right Positions by Voters (Switzerland, Germany, Netherlands and the UK (90s / 2000s) - using Adams et al. 2011 methodology

	tabloid shifts	broad shifts	voter shifts
rile_shift	0.0409		0.0265
	(0.044)		(0.051)
shift in rep. pos (tabloid)		0.00744	0.0349
		(0.025)	(0.030)
shift in rep. pos (broadsheet)		-0.0318	-0.0219
		(0.033)	(0.025)
party visibility			0.00712
			(0.021)
shift in rep. pos (broadsheet) × party visibility			0.0649*
			(0.025)
party visibility			0.000893
			(0.017)
shift in rep. pos (tabloid) × party visibility			0.0523+
			(0.029)
Constant	0.0198	0.0263*	0.0204
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.015)
r2_a	-0.00285	-0.0218	0.113
N	54	49	49

+ p <0.1; * p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001. Party-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

Table C.8: The effect of reported positions in tabloid newspapers on party supporters' perceived left-right positions of parties

	(1) party image	(2) party image	(3) party image
party image (t-1)	0.828***	0.828***	0.812***
	(0.069)	(0.072)	(0.065)
platform position	0.237^{+}	0.159	0.0811
	(0.114)	(0.131)	(0.149)
reported position		0.0490	0.121
		(0.070)	(0.091)
party visibility			0.0285
			(0.017)
party visibility × reported position			0.0806
			(0.050)
party visibility × party image (t-1)			-0.0235
			(0.034)
Constant	0.0385*	0.0422*	0.0397*
	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.016)
N	63	58	58
Adj. R^2	0.945	0.939	0.939

* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001. Party-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

Table C.9: The effect of reported positions in broadsheet newspapers on party supporters' perceived left-right positions of parties

	(1) party image	(2) party image	(3) party image
party image (t-1)	0.828***	0.798***	0.801***
	(0.069)	(0.075)	(0.076)
platform position	0.237+	0.222+	0.186
	(0.114)	(0.129)	(0.132)
reported pos.		0.0721	0.0793
		(0.061)	(0.053)
party visibility			0.0240
			(0.023)
party visibility × reported pos.			0.0435
			(0.061)
party visibility × party image (t-1)			-0.0177
			(0.054)
Constant	0.0385*	0.0451*	0.0390+
	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.020)
N	63	62	62
Adj. R^2	0.945	0.947	0.945

* p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001. Party-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

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